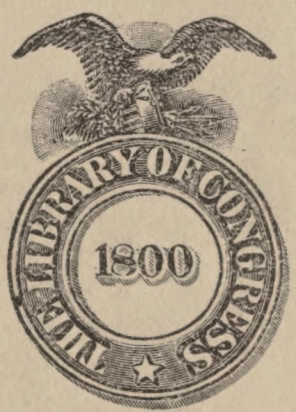
Mr. Responsibility, Partner

Clarence J. Messer



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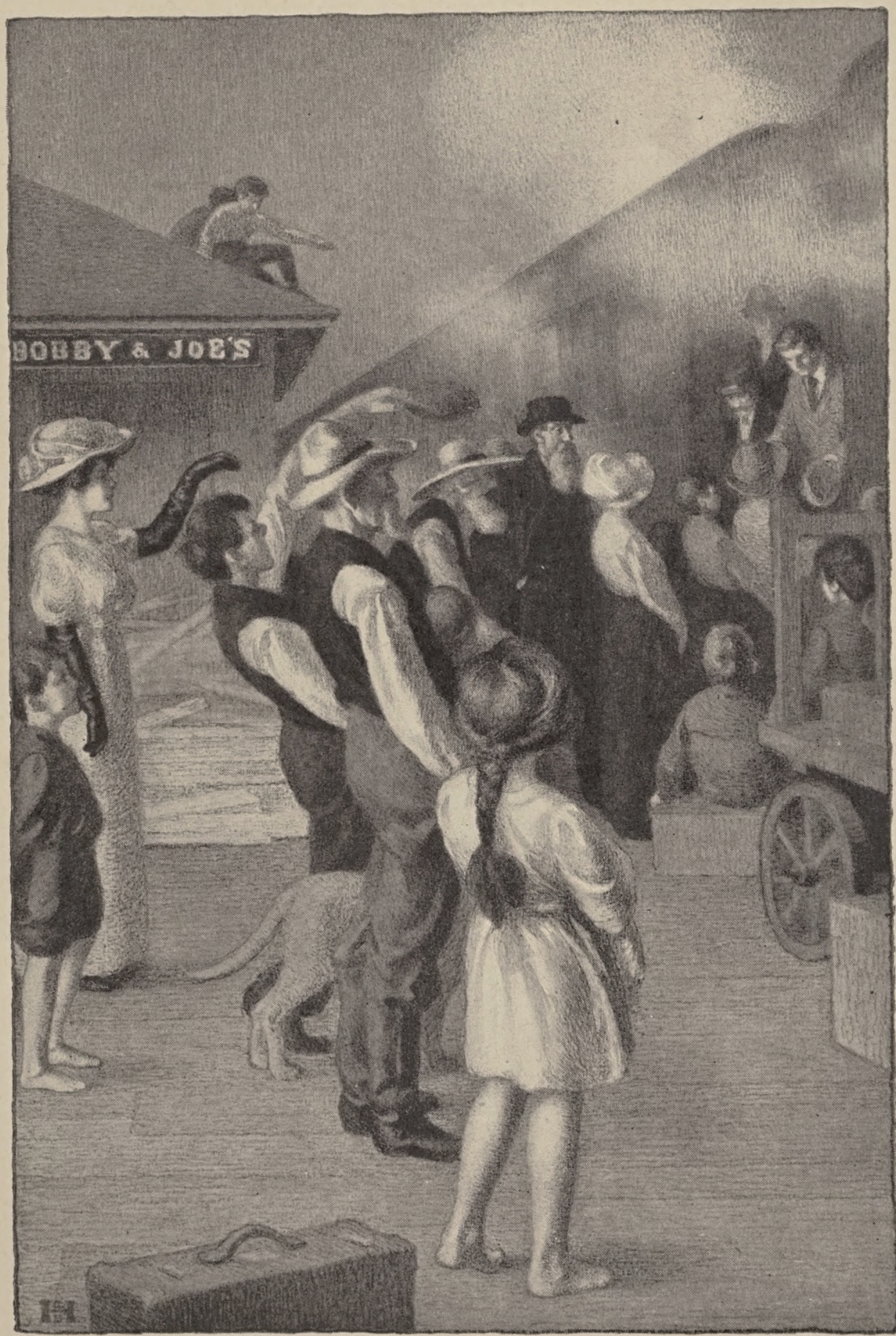
MR. RESPONSIBILITY, PARTNER

HOW BOBBY AND JOE ACHIEVED SUCCESS IN BUSINESS



IT WAS JUST AS BOBBY HAD SAID IT WOULD BE: BOBBY & JOE'S.
Page 152.

MR. RESPONSIBILITY, PARTNER

HOW BOBBY AND JOE ACHIEVED SUCCESS IN BUSINESS

BY

CLARENCE JOHNSON MESSER

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES D. HUBBARD

BOSTON
LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

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TO MY FRIEND,

WILLIAM FREDERIC ANDERSON

ILLUSTRATIONS

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MR. RESPONSIBILITY, PARTNER

How Bobby and Joe Achieved Success in Business.

CHAPTER I

The Hawley farm. A lesson in carpentry. Planning a surprise. Building the raft. A surprised mother.

"How fragrant the pond lilies are to-day!"

It was Mrs. Hawley who made the remark. She was on the back piazza assisting her husband in the trailing of a vine over the porch trellis.

"No more fragrant than on other days, are they?" Mr. Hawley asked. "It seems to me that they have the same odor through their season."

Mrs. Hawley laughed as she returned:

"I suppose that I do not regard them just as you do. When I was a girl, scarcely a day passed in their season that there were not lilies on our dining-table. The scent fascinates me, and although it has come every year of the

twelve that we have lived here, there has never been a lily in the house. Sometimes I do just long for a few of them."

"But when I offer to get some you will not let me," interrupted Bobby, her son, who had come from the barn in time to hear her last statement.

"I do not feel the want badly enough to allow my boy to go out on that treacherous water," the mother said. "But one would think I had some great trouble by the way I am talking. I have the loveliest home in New Hampshire, the kindest husband, and the bravest son in the world, and it would take much more than the lack of a few lilies to put a shadow in my thoughts."

With another laugh she released the end of the vine, which had now been made secure, and went indoors.

Mr. Hawley started toward the barn and the boy followed, saying:

"It's not more than three miles to the lily beds by the south road. I'm going round there and get her some."

"I've never noticed that she craved the lilies," said Mr. Hawley, who was also thought-

ful. "She often speaks of their fragrance, but—"

"I have never heard her want anything else," Bobby answered. "She is talking of them every day."

"Well, she wants you more," was the quick response. "You could not get even a bud from the south road. There's a mile of bog over there, before you reach any lilies."

It was Wednesday afternoon on a June day, which was considered the sultriest of the year down around the three large summer hotels in Thorndike. The Hawley farm, however, was as cool and fragrant as if it were located in another hemisphere. At the foot of the lake and on a height, a refreshing breeze fanned it, coming the full length of the great body of water.

Bobby went to the tool-house to work on a figure-4 trap with which he intended to catch woodchucks. Throwing wide the windows he let in the sweet-scented air, and a few minutes later was hard at work.

From those windows one could look upon an exquisite picture. The great, irregularly shaped sheet of white-capped blue, jutting into

shores densely covered with evergreen, with here and there a wooded island fringed by shimmering white beaches, would have delighted any lover of nature, but Man had also contributed in the adornment of the scene. The white spire of the Thorndike Congregational church thrust a glistening slender pyramid above the green at the upper end of the lake, while the well-defined verandas of three summer hotels, the "Thorndike," the "Thornton," and the "Thorwald," lent an enlivening aspect to the northern shore.

To Bobby, this view was too familiar to be exacting. Occasionally he cast a glance from the window, but he was quite intent on his carpentry. He had worked diligently for an hour when, suddenly turning, he saw his father standing in the doorway. The next instant a command came.

"Don't drive that nail in that way."

"It's nothing but a box-trap, I'm making," the boy replied.

"But you are using nice half-inch stock. If you drive the nail with its wider side across the grain you'll split your wood. No matter if it is only a box-trap you're making. You

may need that same lumber another day, and you'll have a bad-looking job, if you do not split the wood. Whatever you do, do it as well as you can. Start your nail the thin side with the grain of the wood and you'll have a fine job, and can use the stock again."

The boy followed directions and made a clean, firm joining of the boards. His father said:

"I've been thinking about the pond lilies. Perhaps we can get your mother some to-morrow."

Bobby turned a happy, expectant face, and Mr. Hawley went on:

"If you can wake up at four in the morning we'll try to carry out a plan I have."

"I'll wake up," was the ready reply. The boy saw he was not to hear the plan at present, but he knew that whatever the plan was, it would be successful. Mr. Hawley was a loving father, but a man of serious, almost stern disposition. In the directing of his son in the way he thought right, he sometimes appeared harsh, but Bobby had never suffered from too rigid treatment. He had been taught patience and self-control, and now he could wait until

another time for the explanation of the plan. His father continued:

"Better not speak of the matter at the house and there will be no disappointment or worry. Go to bed early, for a four o'clock in the morning appearance is something you're not accustomed to. I should not wonder if you overslept—"

"Not when I am to do something which will give mother pleasure," was the confident reply. "I do not believe that I shall have to be called, even."

That evening when Bobby spoke of going to bed as soon as supper was finished, the mother said, worriedly:

"I have been wondering what made your face so flushed. Does your head ache, dear?"

A quick glance passed between father and son, and the former suggested:

"He's been steadily at work carpentering. I guess it's nothing but a healthful tiredness."

Mrs. Hawley was not satisfied. Many times during the evening her husband had to combat suggested dosings of the boy, but Bobby never slept sounder.

A noise at his window finally awakened him,

and springing from bed he looked out to see his father, who had a long pole in his hands with which he was tapping on the window pane.

"Well," came in a muffled voice, "are you going to have anything to do with making this surprise?"

"Is it late?" Bobby asked, sleepily.

"It's almost five o'clock."

"Can we do it?" The boy's tone was anxious.

"Perhaps we can, seeing that I have been at work on it for an hour and a half." A low laugh accompanied the assurance.

Bobby dressed quickly and hurried down stairs. His father had disappeared. The boy went to the barn. He had never been out at such an early hour before, and the overcast sky and dull blueness of everything confused him. The cold wind that came from the lake forced him to button his jacket closely about his neck.

His father was not in the barn—neither was Dobbin in the stall. Finally he sighted them both down by the shore of the lake.

"My, but I was sleeping hard!" the boy apologized, when he had reached the spot. "What have you got?" looking in surprise at

three great logs which lay on the drag. "Have you been in the woods?"

"Yes, I've been in the woods. I took a youngster into partnership last night and we were going to do some work this morning. He did not turn up, so I had to do it alone. What do you think of a chap that doesn't come around on the first day?"

"And you have brought down all these boards this morning?" Bobby was much ashamed of his failure to keep the appointment.

"Yes, I have done it all this morning. Now we must hustle if your mother is to have any lilies to-day."

With the log-hook Mr. Hawley worked the logs to the ground, and beside one another, measuring at each end to get them exactly parallel. He next began measuring the boards, and Bobby understood it all.

"It's a raft you're making," he suddenly exclaimed. Taking the second hammer he was soon nailing the boards.

"There must be two floors," the father said, "to prevent your getting wet feet. Nail the shorter boards from the outside log to the middle log, then finish that line with another board

to the farther outside log. Use the longer boards from outside to outside log, and be careful to cover the under seams. You can take charge of the floor and I'll make a rail to prevent your falling off the raft. Your mother would never have a minute's peace while you were on the water if there was no rail."

Bobby was a quick worker, and soon had the under floor laid. Starting on the upper floor, he asked:

"Did you plan all this since you got up?"

"No. I planned the complete craft last night, before I decided that we might get the lilies. I shall put a weather-board a foot higher than the floor, and if a high wind should come up while you are away from shore, the water will not come on the raft."

"Will you put a flag-pole at one end?"

"I hadn't thought of it, but we can have one. You see if that partner of mine had come to work as he agreed—"

Bobby showed such distress that his father ceased disciplining him, but laughed away his unhappiness.

"I couldn't help staying asleep," the young fellow argued, mournfully. "I wanted to help.

I have worked well since I got here, haven't I?"

"Well, perhaps I wasn't always on hand when I was your age," the father admitted, and the boy brightened perceptibly. "I want you to see that there is a lesson for you in this slip-up. The sooner that you become acquainted with a certain old friend of mine named 'Responsibility,' the better it will be for you. When I have anything important to do, 'Responsibility,' will hardly allow me to sleep at all. He keeps right after me until every detail is worked out. He made me get up at half-past three this morning. He is a valuable person to have for a friend because he has seen, in this case, that your mother is to get the pond lilies this morning."

It was not a preaching lesson—simply a good-natured talk while both worked—but Bobby will remember its application all his life.

At half-past six the raft, with a flag flying, was pushed from the shore and headed for the lily beds. As the time grew nearer when the mother's wish was to be gratified, the excitement of her son increased.

"I hope she won't catch us at it," he said, half to himself.

"She won't. I told her last night that we were going to the woods this morning and that she could rest until I came back and built the fire. She is pretty tired and will take all the time that's allowed her. Like all farmers' wives, she has had few 'lazy mornings.' "

The murkiness had disappeared before a glorious sunrise. That trip across the lake, on which he had never before been, the gathering of two dozen beautiful lilies, and the return stayed in the boy's memory for many years.

When they landed, Mr. Hawley hurried up to the house to prevent a failure of the surprise. Bobby had crept into the dining-room and had arranged the exquisitely scented flowers in the large punch-bowl and placed it in the center of the table when he heard his mother's voice:

"The wind comes from the southwest. How much stronger the lily scent is than it was yesterday, even! It makes me feel like a girl, again, and I would not be surprised to find a great bowl of lilies on the dining-table."

The boy had tiptoed to the back piazza. His face expressed deep disappointment. She knew all about it, or how could she have said such a thing as that? He heard her step ap-

proaching; then the disappointment disappeared.

There was plenty of astonishment and delight in the cry she gave.

"John! Bobby! How on earth—Why, here is a whole dish of lilies!"

"You just said that you would not be surprised to find it," came in the even, blandishing tone of the father.

Bobby came into the room and his mother said:

"This is why you went to bed so early last night, and why I was given such a long rest this morning. What fine conspirators you are. I am ever so much pleased with the lilies, but I hope that you haven't found a way to get them that's at all dangerous. I shall be frightened until I know all about it."

"We'll show you just how the thing is done as soon as breakfast is over," Mr. Hawley told her. "I guess you will think it is safe enough. Bobby can take you out to the lily beds before he goes to school and you can pick some yourself. It is as safe as all that."

It would have been hard to tell which was

the more excited, the mother who was to experience something so new, or the son who was to have entire charge of her during the trip.

CHAPTER II

THE SUMMER HOTELS. BOBBY'S MOTHER SELLS HER PRESENT. A REGULAR TRADE IN POND LILIES.

THORNDIKE was a junction town on the line of the C. & A. railroad. The Leicester and the Ellsworth branches, each thirty miles long, terminated there.

Three times a day the Thorndike railroad station was a scene of activity. In the morning the branch trains connected with the north-bound local, at noon the north-bound and south-bound expresses met there, and the branch trains arrived and departed, and at night the branch trains met the south-bound local which connected at Hillsboro, forty-two miles down the line, with the express on the tunnel division for Boston.

Five years before our story opens, the town of Thorndike was given a large hotel by the railroad, where summer guests were entertained. The enterprise was undertaken to bring extra travel to the road, and was so suc-

cessful that the year following the opening of the "Thorndike House," the "Thornton House" was also erected, by the road. By this time there was a rush of travel to the pretty, hill-encircled town and an outside syndicate built the magnificent "Thorwald House" as a competitor to the railroad hotels.

It was believed by the railroad people that the syndicate had selected the name for their house with a view to confusing people, and securing guests who were intending to patronize the older houses, and there was much ill-feeling between the managements of the properties. The Thorwald was the most lavishly equipped and offered the same rates as the Thorndike and the Thornton and it was not long before it was getting the largest business. The town of Thorndike was greatly benefited by the opening of the third house, however, as a very wealthy class of people were constantly coming and going.

On the morning when Bobby Hawley and his father had so completely surprised the boy's mother, a lady and gentleman drove away from the Thorwald, taking the "Lake Road," Thornton's most popular drive. Arriving at the foot

of the hill at the lower end of the lake, the lady remarked, looking up the long ascent:

"The Hawley place is more beautiful than it was last year. I have often thought that I could be happy on a farm if it were such a one as that."

"There are but few farms in the country so pleasantly situated," the man returned. "Hawley could get a lot of money for the place if he cared to sell it."

"The scent of the lilies would be an attraction to me," the lady said. "I should think that the Thorwald would have some lilies in the office or in the dining-room. I used to wonder that there were none at the Thorndike last year. They are plentiful enough, judging from the scent."

"I doubt if we get any of the lilies. There's an uncomfortable impression regarding this lake. The Indians said it was bottomless, so the story goes, and unlucky for the person who ventures on it. At all events, these stories were given prominence when the Thorndike opened. The newspapers all over the country nearly ruined the first year's business by their accounts of a drowning accident which befell

some guests. When the Thornton commenced business there was another drowning, and the papers found an old Indian who said that every pleasure party would meet the same fate. That put a damper on boating, which has never revived."

The carriage had now reached the top of the hill. Suddenly the lady exclaimed:

"Why, Mrs. Hawley's front-room window is banked with lovely lilies!"

The man stopped his horse; then, turning, drove to the door of the farmhouse. His ring at the bell was answered by Mrs. Hawley.

"Would you sell me some of your lilies, madam?" he asked.

"Oh, dear—but you'll have to excuse me," was the answer. "I don't believe that money could buy these lilies. They were a present to me from my little boy and his father. I would be pleased if you would take a few as a gift."

"How many are there in the window?"

"There are five dozen and I helped get three dozen of them myself. Aren't they lovely?"

"They certainly are beauties and I will buy them in as nearly as possible their present arrangement, and give your price—"

"But I think I will not sell them," was the laughing rejoinder; "you see I waited twelve years for them and they were a surprise to me."

"I would be willing to give five cents apiece for the lot," the man persisted. "Your boy can get more, and if he were here I think he would advise you to wait one more day and receive your surprise."

Mrs. Hawley's quick mental calculation changed her view-point. The three dollars would give her boy a lot of pin money, and it was true that more lilies could be gotten when Bobby returned from school. She decided to sell, and the trade was made.

When Bobby came at noon his first inquiry, after looking into the front room, was:

"They don't keep long after they are picked, do they?"

"I sold them," was the mother's answer.

"Sold them?" It was in as fully a surprised a shout as the mother had given early that morning.

"Put your hand behind the clock and see what somebody thought they were worth."

SHE DECIDED TO SELL, AND THE TRADE WAS MADE.—*Page 28.*

"Three dollars!" cried the boy, as he unrolled the bills.

"A gentleman and a lady took them. They were the first to pass up the hill this morning. I have thought since that perhaps more could be sold."

Mr. Hawley entered before the boy had recovered from his astonishment.

"Perhaps you have unwittingly run upon a considerable source of income," he said.

"We'll have some more right away," the boy declared.

After dinner a hurried trip was made to the lily-beds, by all three, and besides being a very pleasant expedition, five dozen more buds were secured.

"You'll have your present to-day, just the same," Bobby said.

When he went to school that afternoon another display adorned the front window.

"Sell them if you can," he shouted back.

Two purchasers came for the second lot within an hour of Bobby's departure. They explained that they had seen Mr. and Mrs. Ayres return to the hotel and that there was much in-

terest in the bouquet they had brought. These gentlemen had hurried to get a cluster and were pleased that some could be immediately secured.

"You'll have a run on them," one of the men declared. "I have never seen finer lilies."

Each went away carrying two-and-a-half dozen, consequently Mrs. Hawley was still without her present.

That evening Mr. Hawley had caught some of his son's excitement.

"If the demand continues you will have a business of considerable importance," he told the boy. "The novelty will wear off, of course, but I think you ought to sell a few every day if you make it known at the hotels that you are taking orders. It was your suggestion to get the lilies, and the business, if you make one, will be wholly yours. I will spend a little time with you if you cannot supply the demand alone. If prosperity shows a liability to turn your head I will declare you incompetent to manage large affairs and take the business to carry on, in trust."

"What does that mean?" asked the delighted boy.

"You'll do the work, and I will manage the

finances," was the reply. "I'll make an accounting to your estate."

"Don't bother him, John," Mrs. Hawley interposed. "He doesn't know anything about estates."

"It won't hurt him to learn about estates," the father resumed. "When a boy of sixteen can make six dollars a day it is time he knew something of the responsibility that the possession of money entails. There's many a head of a family who would like his chance. It is positively wicked to waste money, and it is equally as wicked to get a gratification from hoarding it. Bobby is under age and his estate consists of his parents. He is already possessed of an estate in the five hundred dollars left by his Aunt Lydia's will, but he cannot touch it until he is of age. Here is another estate—a conditional estate in his service—which, if I had not agreed otherwise, would belong to me. He shall have all he makes, but I want him to know how important a young fellow he has come to be, and that I expect him to show judgment in the handling of his property."

"I won't spend a cent unless you tell me I may," Bobby promised, "but I wish I had a

book and paper and pencil to keep the money right."

"You go and hitch up Dobbin and we'll carry some eggs down to Mr. Bradbury's store; then we'll get the book and other things," the mother said.

In half an hour they were on the road. Bobby's enthusiasm was given full vent when he was alone with his doting mother.

"Six dollars!" he exclaimed rapturously. "I didn't think I would ever make so much money as that."

"Six dollars is considerable," she told him. "But I think Papa would rather have you consider how much good can be done with it than have you consider only that you have it."

Mrs. Hawley told the grocer of the good-fortune that had come to her son, and the boy was congratulated. The grocer had never especially noticed him before and he began to think that he really was an important fellow, as his father had suggested. Afterwards, he bought his articles for the care of his money, then they started for home. They were passing the Thorndike House when a man raised his hand to attract their attention.

"Isn't this the Hawley boy?" the man asked, as they drew up.

"Yes, I'm Bobby Hawley," the boy returned.

"I understand that you are selling pond lilies."

"Yes, sir," in a business-like tone. "Would you like some?"

"What are you asking for them? Some of our people were saying that you had sold some Thorwald people some fine lilies."

"The gentlemen from the Thorwald paid five cents apiece for them."

"That's a pretty stiff price, isn't it?"

"They are big lilies," Bobby returned. He was anxious to make a trade without assistance. Two other gentlemen had approached, and the boy continued, in a voice which all could hear, "You know that Thorndike Lake is a pretty dangerous place and I have to look out and not get drowned."

The man laughed and gave an order.

"My name is Charles Hamilton. You can leave three dozen with Mr. Brewster, the clerk of the Thorndike, and he will pay you for them. Can I have them in the morning?"

"Before nine o'clock," Bobby answered, en-

tering the order in his book. He gathered the reins and was about to start, when he looked up and shouted to the retreating Mr. Hamilton, "Thank you, sir."

"Wait," called one of the gentlemen who had been listening; "if you can deliver another three dozen at the Thorndike at the same time, I'll take them. Tell Mr. Brewster they are for Mr. Ashley."

Another entry was made in the book and another thankful acknowledgment given, and the team started away.

"I guess the business will keep up," the excited boy exclaimed. "It will be fine to go out after lilies that are already sold. This is what father meant by the 'demand.' We shall have to get more than six dozen so that you can have some for yourself."

The boy told his father just what his purchasers had said, and just how he had answered, when he arrived home.

"But suppose it should rain in the morning or a high wind should be stirring up the white-caps. Unless you deliver at nine o'clock you haven't made your sales," the father suggested.

Bobby began to walk the floor, his forehead wrinkled in thought. Finally he answered:

"I've just got to get them, rain or not. I've taken the orders and I won't disappoint any one. I'll keep close to the shore and there will be no danger. I did not think of rain or wind but there's a good weather-board on the raft and I'll take my shoes off. I'll get the lilies if it blows like sixty."

"You'll have them," Mr. Hawley declared heartily. "I'll go over with you. I see that you have become acquainted with my old friend, 'Responsibility.' "

CHAPTER III

BALANCING THE BOOKS. A SHORT LESSON IN PHYSICS.

MR. HAWLEY'S prediction that the novelty would wear off was not borne out by the facts. The demand for the lilies remained steady throughout the season, and Bobby became well known in the lobbies of all three hotels, where he went each evening to secure orders.

It was but natural that considerable attention should be given the boy by Thorndike people, for it was known that the pond-lily business had become a source of surprising revenue and fathers and mothers held the young merchant up as an example to sons who had not shown any especial aptitude towards "making something of themselves."

This view of his son's accomplishment did not please Mr. Hawley.

"He has done nothing smart," he told his friend, Henry Bradbury, in the latter's grocery store. "It was an accident in the first place, though he has followed it up pretty

closely. I haven't a doubt that any boy in town, meeting the same conditions, would have done as well as he has. It has got to be something besides this to impress me that the boy is smarter than his mates. I call him mighty lucky, and that's all."

It was for such remarks as this that John Hawley had come to be known as a "just man." He would not have anything for himself or any member of his family which did not belong to him. He wanted the cent which was due him, but he also insisted on paying the cent if it was due from him. His word was as good as his bond.

It was probably because of the high esteem in which the man was held by his townspeople that there had been no interference with his son's pond-lily business. Any father could have made a raft on the lines of the one already fashioned. It was known that there was money in the business. The lilies were free to any one who might go for them, but the Hawley boy was the only person who offered them for sale during that entire season.

Mr. Hawley had opened a simple set of books for his son on the night of that first sale. A

day-book carried memoranda of everything done, either in sales or expenses, and in the order which they occurred, and these were posted into the ledger every night, the boy's mother being near by to see that the work was properly done.

On the night that the hotels closed their doors for the season Mr. Hawley assisted in striking the balance, though his wife was still near at hand. The page showed:

To expense bro't for'd		$ 22.60	By am't bro't for'd				$280.50
			8	23	1	doz. Jacobs, Te.	.60
					3	" Keith, Tn..	1.80
					2	" Todd, Te...	1.20
				24	2	" Smith, Td..	1.20
					3	" Emery, Td.	1.80
				25	10	" Thorwald .	7.20
					10	" Thorndike .	7.20
To cash in bank...		286.10			10	" Thornton ..	7.20
		308.70					$308.70

"What do you use the abbreviations for?" his father asked.

"What a question for such a great man!" interposed Mrs. Hawley. "How would he remember where Mr. Todd and Mr. Smith should have the delivery made?"

"That's very good," with a laugh. "I see that you lowered your price on the last day."

"I was wholesaling to-day," was the reply.

"It is a pretty big summer's work for even a much older person than you. I didn't appreciate what could be done, that's sure. Of course you will not look for such good fortune next year. You'll doubtless have competition."

"Why, who would be a competitor with him?" Mrs. Hawley asked. "He thought of it first."

"Do you know that some one thought of a sewing-machine, and a typewriter, first—but some one else was building both as soon as it was found that people would buy them. Even a patented article can be stolen, so why would an idea be protected when the money-making ingredient is scot-free to everybody? He will have competition."

"There are no boys around here that will want to sail clear across the lake," Bobby declared, confidently. "We live where we don't have to sail very far. I would like to get me a good boat for next year."

"Now don't begin on that, dear," interrupted Mrs. Hawley, quickly. "I shall not have a minute's peace all winter for I shall think of

nothing but that boat. You'll be upset the first time you go out in it, I know you will."

"I think we will get along without a boat," Mr. Hawley said.

"But the raft pushes so hard," Bobby complained. "If any other boy should go into the lily business I would want a craft that was faster than his—"

"We'll fix false prows for the raft, and she'll push easier and go fast enough—"

"And be just as safe as she is now?" enquired the mother.

"Just as safe. The raft in its present shape presents over five feet of breaking space to the water. If you put a needle carefully into a tumbler of water it will stay on top of the water. When water stays comparatively still a skin forms on it, so the needle will lie on that skin—"

"I've seen hundreds of lucky-bugs skating around on top of the water, down in the meadow," Bobby broke in. "I didn't know how they did it, but now I remember that they were going around like sixty on shiny water. That was the skin?"

"Yes, let a lucky-bug, or a needle, break

through the skin and it will go to the bottom. The breaking of the skin sends water into millions of molecules. When the raft breaks the water along its five feet of front it plays havoc with the water skin and sends it into hundreds of millions of molecules which form resistance to the progress of the craft. We'll rebuild it so that the water skin will be pierced at only one point, and lessen the resistance and that will give a faster trip."

"Which is just as safe?" again interposed the mother.

"Yes," laughed the father. "You won't forget that feature of it, will you?"

"I am so glad that there will be no boat. I don't know anything about the water, but I could see that the raft could not tip over," Mrs. Hawley concluded, satisfied.

"We are going to study about the buoyancy of water at school," Bobby said. "I'll be glad to know because I never could see what kept those big ships we saw in Boston on top of the water. I should think the heavy things would sink."

"A ship-builder has something just as solid to build on as a railroad-builder. The ship-

builder knows that one foot below the surface of the water there is a buoyant pressure of about one-half a pound to the square inch of surface exposed to it. Ten feet below there is a buoyancy of five pounds to the square inch. This buoyancy not only presses upwards, but sideways. The more the ship is loaded, the lower she sits in the water and the greater the buoyancy that she receives. She can not sink unless she is cut badly in a collision and water gets inside her, and even then, the water-tight compartments they have now will keep her aloft."

"Then a ship is as safe as a railroad train?" Mrs. Hawley asked.

"More safe, because there is not so much chance of a smash in sailing ships."

"I think I shall not be so frightened the next time I take a long sail," she concluded.

"The teacher told us about flying-machines," Bobby began. "I do not see how they stay up."

"Momentum and spread of wing keep them up," the father explained. "There is an entirely different principle involved in the flying machine which is foreign to the method of pro-

pulsion in either ship or railroad. If the mechanism in the flying-machine stops, down she comes. If the machinery in the ship or train breaks, she stands still until repairs can be made. I was looking at the goldfish in Lawyer Gordon's bowl a few days ago and I got to thinking of flying-machines. The surface they present to the water is so slight that they have to keep little fins moving when they are not swimming. If those fins were fastened somehow, they would sink."

"You do not think flying-machines will be a success?" the wife asked.

"I can't see it, yet," was the reply; "that is, a commercial success. A balloon is the safest of the air craft, because it is lighter than air and is given a buoyancy by the air, but in heavy storms I would not call it safe. When Bobby learns that a new principle has been discovered which will give a flying machine the stability of water craft, I will believe that nicely adjusted machinery, together with the newly found principle of stability will overcome the element of danger which is ever present in a flying-machine, to such extent that it is positively unsafe."

"Well," concluded Mrs. Hawley, "I guess this family will be satisfied with the raft, to do our traveling with—and Dobbin."

CHAPTER IV

PLANS FOR REBUILDING THE RAFT. FRIEND RESPONSIBILITY AGAIN. THE SNOW-STORM. MR. BRADBURY'S ADVICE. THE STALLED TRAIN. "BOBBY HAWLEY'S RELIEF EXPEDITION."

IT was not many weeks after the three great hotels had been boarded against the winter storms before Mr. Hawley got the raft out of the water, and on the first frost Dobbin drew it to a shed which had been built alongside the tool-house, and connected with it.

"Now she's snug and tight and we can work on her as odd jobs," he said. "I wouldn't wonder if your mother did not know her in the spring. We will make her oval. The *Monitor,* that destroyed the *Merrimac* during the Civil War, was oval. She hadn't a projection except her prow to break the water skin that I told you about. I've been thinking—"

"What?" demanded the impatient boy, for his father was still thinking.

"We can carry two fixed tubs, or boxes, one on each false prow, to stow the lilies in, and

one of these boxes can be made higher at the cutwater, and a bowsprit can be supported on it. Then we could add a mast and you would not have to push the craft. You could sail her."

"Mother would have half a dozen fits if sails were put on." Bobby's voice had a regretful tone because of the seeming impossibility of the improvement.

"Not if we convince her that there would be no danger, even from a sudden squall of wind," Mr. Hawley returned. "I have known her longer than you have, and I never knew a person more amenable to reason. Don't you judge her from her love of you."

Some days later Mr. Hawley brought to the kitchen table a drawing of the raft as she would appear when the changes were made.

"You must have thought a lot over this," Bobby said.

"My old side-partner, 'Responsibility,' kept at me because he knew that you would want to be at work on her pretty soon. I think you'll be satisfied with the outcome."

"Don't you think that I am getting pretty well acquainted with that fellow, Responsi-

bility?'' Bobby asked. ''I think out things, sometimes.''

''He wasn't very close to you last week when you forgot to deliver the letter from your Aunt Mary and thereby made her pay her fare up from the train.''

It was done good-naturedly, but it cut very deep. His father had not said one word about that oversight, before. Bobby thought a long time, then remarked, a great part of the confidence removed from his voice, ''I won't brag any more, but I'll try to get him to take some notice of me.''

Mr. Hawley laughed at the lugubriousness of the tone, but he was serious enough when he resumed:

''Forgetfulness is one of the first things that Responsibility puts out of business. It's a good thing it's so, for forgetfulness is the cause of one-half of all the mistakes and failures that occur. Heedlessness starts from forgetfulness, and it is heedlessness that makes the engineer run his train by the danger signal, and the pilot take chances that throw his ship on the rocks. If you get in right with Responsibility, forgetfulness and heedlessness will give

you a wide berth, and you'll be sure to come out on top."

As November came in Bobby was too busy with other things to spend much time remaking the raft. He had never before been able to give presents for Christmas, but now he was indulging himself—buying with his own money. What he purchased went to the debit side of his ledger, but there was no need now for other eyes than his own to oversee that book. In his commode drawer, well boxed, he had a pretty watch for his mother, and in another box was a safety razor which his father was to receive.

December was a month of snows that year. Many a day the school was closed and the boy and his father worked on the raft because the weather was too boisterous to allow any pleasure in being out of doors. The snow covered the fence tops, and in each lull the beaten sleigh-track was as high as the window-sills. The morning of the twenty-third of December opened with the hardest blizzard the section had known in ten years.

"And I promised Mr. Bradbury that I would surely bring down every egg we could spare,

this morning,'' Mrs. Hawley complained, as she viewed the wind-whirled snow through a hole she had melted in the frost-covered window pane.

''I'll carry the eggs down,'' Bobby volunteered; ''I'll put the saddle on Dobbin—''

''Not in such an awful storm as this,'' objected the mother. ''Mr. Bradbury will not have many customers, anyway.''

''You promised to have them there,'' interposed Mr. Hawley. ''It won't hurt Bobby a particle to go down. It will be a lark for both him and Dobbin. You seem to forget that he is almost seventeen years old.''

In half an hour the boy and the horse were weathering the fierce gusts and the whirling snow. Dobbin lowered his head and his vigorous shakes showed that it was not really unpleasant to him. As they passed along the main street people opened doors and shouted to him to bring up their mail. Their voices sounded away off, and Bobby laughed back, as they slammed the doors in the face of the driving snow. When he arrived at the grocery store, Mr. Bradbury received him with a glad hail.

"You're all right," was the grocer's greeting. "Your eggs will help me out amazingly. I had begun to think I would have to stand off my customers to-morrow, too. Now let me tell you something to keep under your hat. It's such a time as this that a fellow can get all the good there is in a trade. The man who buys is put under an obligation for being allowed to pay. I was pinched for the want of eggs. When a man is pinched, help him out. Don't let a little snow stop you. You have an opportunity to do some good, and you want to grasp it."

Bobby felt quite embarrassed. Mr. Bradbury had never said so much to him before in all his life. It was evident to the boy that this was a time when a man was glad to pay the money.

It looked as though the boy was the only person who had ventured on Thorndike's streets. No attempt had been made to break out the sidewalks. In spite of the dreariness of it, Bobby enjoyed every minute. He was warmly dressed and his touch on Dobbin's neck always brought forth a cheerful whinny. He was heading toward the depot, attracted by the

desolateness of everything, when he heard his name called. Mr. Marsh, the station-master, was coming towards him, waist-deep in the drifts.

"Is your father down?" Mr. Marsh's shout was so deadened by the howling storm that Bobby did not try to speak. He shook his head in the negative. The depot-master was nearer when he called:

"I wanted to tell him that the local that ought to be in last night is stuck in the snow, somewhere. There's a couple hundred people on her that are mighty hungry, I'm thinking. If John was down we'd try to see if we couldn't get to her with some food."

Bobby never could explain how it happened, but he was aware of Mr. Bradbury's words coming back to him—those which he was to keep under his hat.

"Don't stop because it snows. When a man is pinched, help him out. When you have an opportunity to do some good you want to grasp it."

In a minute he had said, for he thought that women and children were hungry as well as men:

"I'll get food to the train."

"You?" the howl of the storm could not drown the astonishment in that shout. The next came in an eager voice, and the station-master's face showed newly awakened interest, "I believe you could do it."

If there had been a particle of indecision in the boy, it was gone now. A man had expressed confidence that he could do it. He shouted as loudly as he could:

"Where do you think the train is?"

"Must be in Pile Canyon," was the reply. "Likely the engine's off the track. Wires are all down and we don't know anything about it."

Bobby went to the post office and finding no mail for anybody, got back to Mr. Bradbury's store as quickly as possible. Short as the trip was, the boy had time to do some planning.

"Put up all the sardines and bread and such stuff you have," he shouted as he entered. "Last night's local is up in Pile Canyon and there's a lot of people on her. I'm going to get some food to them."

Mr. Bradbury stared; Bobby went on:

"I'll tell the people along the road to get

what stuff they have to you, and I'll pay for it. I've got money enough and I can sell all we can carry to the train. This is one of the times when people will think the chance to pay, puts them under an obligation."

Mr. Bradbury had recovered himself.

"By George, I didn't waste any lecture on you to-day, did I? You've taken my advice quicker than any one else ever did. Get home as soon as you can. You've got a father who will help you out in this, and you can count on me, too."

Bobby pushed Dobbin hard on the homeward trip. At each house he called some one to the door and told of the stalled train, offering to buy such food as might be for sale if it was brought to the grocery store. When he reached home, Mr. Hawley offered at once to see him through with the undertaking.

"We'll take the two big horses and the bob-sled," Mr. Hawley proposed. "Dick and John can pull us to Pile Canyon in three hours in a storm twice as bad as this one."

Mrs. Hawley could not sufficiently admire her son, but she took time enough from that occupation to clean off her Christmas pantry shelves

to back up the expedition for the relief of the stalled passengers.

"I'll bundle up and go down, too," she said. "I will stay with Mrs. Bradbury until you come back." When the team came up to the door she was ready to undergo her first experience in a blizzard on a bob-sled.

There was a different aspect down town when Bobby came up to the grocery store, this time. The blizzard still raged, but there was no indication of the stillness of the morning. Women were struggling through the snow with edibles and four double-hitch sleds stood waiting the need of their services. A number of rigs were on hand to do the work of road-breaking.

At half-past three in the afternoon, everything was in readiness for the start. Only one of the double hitches was needed, and the goods were distributed evenly between that and the Hawley team. Each load carried a large wash-boiler of coffee, great cans of milk, pies, doughnuts, bread, sandwiches, hams, coal for heating the coffee in case the fuel on the train was exhausted, and a large jack to be used to lift the engine on the tracks if there had been such an accident as to derail it. Twelve light runners,

each carrying two men with shovels, stood in procession, as Mr. Hawley gathered up his reins. Bobby was beside his father.

The start had commenced when Mr. Marsh came hurrying over from the station, holding up his hand to delay them. The procession stopped.

"I've got a line to Hillsboro," shouted Mr. Marsh. "Here's a message from Mr. Henderson. I wired him what was being done. I'm going along with you."

The station-master put the message in Bobby's hand, but the boy passed it to his father, who read, in a loud voice:

"ROBERT HAWLEY, THORNDIKE: Am advised of what you are doing for the relief of the passengers on south-bound local due at your town yesterday. Supply passengers without charge and send the bill to the road. I'll see that it is promptly paid. Your effort greatly appreciated.

"HENDERSON, DIV. SUPT."

It was the cheer which went up from the half a hundred men present which gave Bobby the

full realization that he had done something important. He was a very happy boy as he saw the fond, proud smile on his mother's face as the teams moved away.

There was one more interruption and it caused another cheer. Mr. Bradbury came running out to throw a cloth over Mr. Hawley's load. On the cloth was painted in large letters:

BOBBY HAWLEY'S RELIEF EXPEDITION.

There was no doubt in any mind about the expedition's getting to the train, for it was in charge of John Hawley. Beside his father stood Bobby, the proudest boy that had ever been raised in Thorndike.

CHAPTER V

THE STALLED TRAIN. BOBBY RECEIVES A SNUB FROM THE ENGINEER. A HANDY CROWD OF THORNDIKERS ARE BROUGHT HOME. BOBBY MEETS THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE DIVISION.

No one of that party remembered such another storm as this, which the relief expedition was fighting. They had not cleared the outskirts of the town before a change in the makeup of the procession was found necessary on account of the slowness of their progress.

A consultation was held, and although Mr. Marsh and Bobby's father endeavored to keep the boy covered from the fiercest of the blasts, he would not stay behind them, but came where he could see and hear all that occurred.

Two double hitches abandoned their runners, the men mounting the horses and traveling ahead. The light runners were started in pairs, and by the time the five pairs had leveled the furrows the four mounted horses had made, the loaded bob-sleds had quite a comfortable road.

It was still slow work, however, and Bobby remembered it all for a long time. The sleet-caked horses strained, and the sled creaked. Men shouted. Trees thrashed in the wind and the snow flew every way. Every time the men on the bob-sled held any conversation it was in a roar.

"I miscalculated on the time it will take," Mr. Hawley shouted to Mr. Marsh. "If we make it in five hours we'll do well enough."

There were a few farmhouses scattered along the route, but their occupants preferred to stay inside, for although the shouting was unusual in that neighborhood, no doors were opened to ascertain the cause. As night came on the appearance of desolation seemed to increase.

The journey ended, but when the procession came to Pile Canyon there was no noisy approach. Men and horses were too tired to put out any more exertion than what was actually required to keep in motion; yet when Mr. Hawley's bob-sled arrived, the entire train knew that their long fast was about to be broken.

The relief expedition put new life into the snow-imprisoned passengers at once. Mr. Hawley's men cut wood, and replenished the

THE RELIEF EXPEDITION PUT NEW LIFE INTO THE SNOW-IMPRISONED PASSENGERS.—*Page 58.*

fires in the cars. Children ceased wailing and went to sleep after long drinks of warmed milk. Men and women brightened up under the strength which plenty of food gave them, and the entire aspect was changed in a few minutes. "Bobby Hawley's Relief Expedition" was well advertised through the grateful hearts of those he had succored. There was nothing to pay, and when the people heard of the order to distribute food free of charge, which the Division Superintendent had sent over the wires, there was an end of the complaint against the road because of the discomfort. Women settled themselves for sleep and the men smoked and played cards in much the same way that they do on an ordinary train trip.

Bobby went early to the engineer with his father. That official, with the conductor, was cross and discouraged.

"We've got the worst engine on the road," the engineer growled. "If we had anything better than a two-quart teapot, we'd have stayed on the rails. The thing ain't big enough to haul a train and carry a couple of jacks at the same time, so we're hung up until some one comes along and gives us a lift."

Mr. Hawley made an examination of the engine's position.

"We've got a couple of jacks," he said.

"Oh, you have?" The engineer began to arouse himself from the cab-seat. "Come, you kid, better get back in the train. You'll only be in the way, here," he called.

Bobby, to whom the last remark was made, flushed to the roots of his hair. He had climbed into the engine, and was looking around with intense curiosity. He was backing down the steps when the fireman grasped him by the arm.

"You know whose pie you're eatin', Tompkins?" he asked.

"Well, whose is it?" The surly engineer held the pie aloof as if awaiting a referee's decision on the matter.

"It was brought by this young feller you're so cocky to. It's him that's feedin' you."

Amazement had come over the grimy face.

"Say, sonny," the harsh tone apologetic, "fergit what I said. You own the engine. So you're the chap that's brought the relief expedition. That's a good slab of pie, and if I had another I'd eat it."

Bobby had recovered from his confusion.

The man's rough speech and strange expressions interested him.

"I'll get you some more, and some coffee, too," he said.

He was away, and soon returned with a quart-measure of coffee, besides sandwiches and pie. The engineer took a long draught from the measure, then passed it to his fireman. Bobby was watching the besmeared men as if they were curiosities. When the engineer had finished his portion of the food, he went to the side of his engine and looked at Mr. Hawley, who was still studying the position of the engine. Bobby came as near as possible, in anticipation of a delight in the conversation the uncouth man would make, and heard:

"Hi, somebody down there. Where's Tucker?"

The conductor came around the head of the engine, and called:

"What d'ye want?"

"Have you eat?"

"Yes, I've eat."

"Well, are you going to stay in this gulch the rest of your life? What d'ye think we're havin' here, a lodge meetin'?"

"I guess I will, if I have to depend on you to git me out. I ain't runnin' the engine."

The engineer brought his head quickly into the cab. He was rubbing his chin reflectively, for the conductor's thrust seemed to have hit him hard, when Bobby said to him:

"My father has the two jacks he told you about, and the men who came up will do anything he asks them to. There's about forty of them and they've got picks and shovels and ropes besides the jacks." As the old man made no comment whatever, the boy went to the side of the cab and shouted, "Hey, father. Come up and talk to Mr. Tompkins about getting the train moving."

Mr. Hawley came "up" and after a quarter-hour a plan was formed which would give the relief expedition further work. The engineer announced it through the cab window in a spiteful bellow.

"Hi, Tucker! Hawley's going to get me on the iron and I'm going to take his men and teams down to Thorndike."

"How'll you take the hosses? In the engine?" was the spiteful retort.

"We're going back to Sutton's sawmill and

bring up two empty box cars and a flat that's there on Siding 22."

"Go ahead with your plan, Tompkins," interposed Mr. Marsh. "I'll take the responsibility. Tucker is off his schedule and is running a dead train. There hasn't a wheel turned on this division to-day, so there's no orders."

The relief party was divided, five men staying with the engineer, and the remainder under Mr. Hawley going back to Sutton's mill. Of the larger party, twenty-five men shoveled the track out, the others going ahead to locate a section shed and get a hand-car which they were to convert into a snow-plow.

Bobby stayed with the engine and saw stringers put beside the track and the jacks placed on them. The bogie-truck, only, was off the rails. In three hours it was back again and the train was backing to the mill.

Close to the switch of Siding 22, Mr. Hawley's gang had the improvised snow-plow, and when the train had passed, it was run out on the main track. The engine and baggage-car came up and were run down after the freight cars—then the entire train pulled back to the entrance of the canyon.

"That's a good plow," the engineer said. "You've got some good mechanics in Thorndike."

He was a different man now that he saw a possibility of getting on his way. He was confidential with Bobby, who was having the time of his life in the engine, watching everything.

"You find Tucker and tell him that as soon as the Thorndikers get Pile Canyon shoveled I'm ready to start, and I'll keep going," he told the boy.

Bobby found the conductor and delivered the message, then went through the train.

"How you coming on?" a man asked him.

"You'll be in Thorndike by one o'clock, the engineer says," was his answer.

"You're the fellow that sold the pond lilies at the Thorwald last summer, aren't you?" the man continued.

"Yes, I had the lilies."

"Well, you ought to get more than you made all summer for this job. It would have been a starved crowd if you hadn't brought your relief expedition up. The railroad didn't do anything to help us out after starting us off with a crippled engine. If we had stayed here an-

other night there would have been some lawsuits."

It was a slow trip down, for every few minutes the shovelers were called on, to dig out the plow. With the allaying of the excitement the boy felt a drowsiness creeping over him. When the train arrived at Thorndike he was sound asleep on the fireman's seat.

The next thing he was conscious of was that there was a big light from another locomotive glaring down on him, and he was in the midst of a crowd, some of which were Thorndike men and others were the people who had been passengers on the stalled train. His father was holding him and trying to get him on his feet, and at the same time was saying:

"Come, wake up. Mr. Henderson, the Superintendent of the Division, has got here on an engine to help the local, and he wants to speak to you."

Bobby saw the big man, who looked down on him with a smile, as he said:

"So you're the chap that has done all this. Well, it will be a good night's work for you." Turning to the men who had assisted in getting the train through, he asked: "Are you men

willing to let this job stand to the credit of the boy?"

"Sure!" came in a shout. One man added, "He started it! We just had the fun!"

"If there's any man who wants pay for his labor I'll settle with him now," the Superintendent went on.

Not a man came forward.

"All right, men. The road is obliged to you. That's all I can say now. We'll set off the freight cars and you can unload your teams when you have a mind to;" then to Bobby, "You needn't send in any bill. I'll see that the road settles with you for the whole thing."

Bobby did not know how he got home for he went to sleep again as soon as the bob-sled was off the car and he could be wrapped in the robes. When he next awoke, the sun was shining into his room. His little clock pointed to twenty minutes of twelve. He went to his window and saw that his father had shoveled the paths and he realized that he had been undressed and put to bed without awakening. He thought the clock must be wrong until he heard his mother come to the downstairs door and listen, and he called:

"What time is it, Mother?"

"It's dinner time," was the answer. "Hurry up. We're waiting for you."

CHAPTER VI

DISPOSING OF THE MONEY. A FATHER'S AND A MOTHER'S WAY OF GIVING A BOY HOME SCHOOLING. THE PORTION OF CAPITAL AND LABOR.

THE "Relief Expedition" furnished the subject for nine days' talk—not only in Thorndike, but also the whole country got an account of it in the newspapers. In a week the railroad company had sent the boy three hundred dollars and a railroad pass which would enable him to travel anywhere on the company's lines for three years without payment.

"Well," said Mr. Hawley, as he regarded the amazed boy, "what do you propose to do with all that money?"

"He will have to pay for the food people contributed. I have an account of everything," interposed Mrs. Hawley.

"Including the forty pies and the wash-boiler of coffee you sent?" queried the father, with a twinkle in his eyes.

"No, I did not charge for our part."

"Although the men who carried the stuff and

did the work would not accept anything from the railroad company, I shouldn't wonder if they would take a little present from Bobby, in payment for their time and the use of their teams," Mr. Hawley suggested. "There were forty of them and I know every man who was there. Two dollars and a half each is not big pay for what they did, and although Ben Davis said he did it for the fun there was in it, he could use a little money any time it came his way. Bobby was the instigator of the whole thing, but he had to have helpers and I believe in paying a man if he does something to help me along in this world. I think that one hundred dollars, at least, should be divided among the helpers. Let them have a dance, or do anything they like with the money, if they don't want to keep it, but it will stop many a hard after-thought, and show only justice if they have a portion of the money that was given. I believe also that it is right that his mother should get pay for her pies and coffee."

"Tompkins, the engineer, said it was a good slab of pie," Bobby broke in, with a laugh. "It was mother's pie he had eaten, too."

"We're obliged to Tompkins, but the praise

was not necessary to the members of her family,'' the husband continued, and Mrs. Hawley looked her pleasure. ''As for getting payment, she did the work and will have to do it over again. Bobby is the capitalist as the business has turned out, but both capital and labor have their rights.''

''I figured that outside of my own contribution—reckoning at the price Mr. Bradbury charges for such food—forty dollars ought to pay for everything that came from the store and from Thorndike people,'' Mrs. Hawley said.

''And if you added yours?''

''At ten cents each for pies and twenty cents a quart for coffee, mine would come to twelve dollars.''

''Twelve dollars represents your material and labor. I guess that as long as the bill has been so well paid, you're entitled to your share. There's something which Bobby wants to learn right now, and that is that no man can get everything while others get nothing in this world, without a serious condition following. I want him to be zealous and get all that rightfully be-

longs to him, but never to let avarice carry him further."

"If he paid the men a hundred dollars, and for the food fifty-two, do you think the rest would be too much for him to keep?"

Mrs. Hawley showed a little anxiety as she asked it.

"It's a pretty good percentage for capital," Mr. Hawley answered, laughing. "You know he did not have to put out a cent—"

"But he would have had to if the railroad had not done what it has."

"Bobby ran no risk whatever. He could have sold everything that was carried to the train. Of course he conceived the idea and he should be paid for it. He promoted the scheme, and having the confidence of the neighborhood, he got their food. That confidence represents a function of capital and is worth a portion of the receipts; but he could not have worked his plan beyond its conception if it had not been for me and the other men who had horses, and the people who had food to furnish. Now you want him to get one hundred and forty-eight dollars, and I think that would be an unfair di-

vision, considering the actual part he took in the matter.''

''But, John, you know that people who have the money and the—the influence, or confidence of the public, always get the largest share—''

''Not always fairly. In this case all the people who furnished food used time that was wasted, to them, because they must do the work all over again to supply their own needs. Bobby should pay for that time because he has made money on that time. If he keeps one hundred dollars and gives the men three dollars each and pays eighty dollars around among the food contributors, everybody will be pleased and satisfied.''

It was decided that the money should be so divided.

''How will I get it paid?'' the boy asked.

''Deposit the check in the First National Bank and draw checks against it until everybody is paid. You will have proof that you have paid each person, for each check must be endorsed by the person to whom it was made before the money will be paid.''

''I did not know boys could have check-

books," Bobby said; "I don't have any at the savings bank."

"Because that is a bank for savings. The national banks are for assistance in business. You can deposit to-day and draw to-morrow. By their use a man need not have a cent of money on him, and a boy can have a bank account if his parents desire him to have one. I guess it will be a better idea to use the national bank than I first thought. It makes another kind of bookkeeping for you, and it should make a boy better trained to take care of his money."

The check was carried to the bank the next day, Mr. Hawley going with the boy.

"He's a pretty young merchant," the bank cashier remarked, smiling.

"That's a fault that will soon be corrected," Mr. Hawley returned.

The cashier laughed, and shook Bobby's hand, as he commented:

"Thorndike is proud of its merchants, and we all know that this one has had a very remarkable career."

Mr. Hawley opened the check-book for the

boy that evening. Bobby wrote the checks and entered the payments on the stubs.

"You've made four checks of three dollars each," the watchful father instructed. "You add up these amounts and place twelve dollars at the bottom of your page. Turn back a leaf and put the twelve dollars beside 'Checks Drawn,' and subtract that amount from the three hundred dollars which is up here beside 'Deposits', and you have two hundred and eighty-eight dollars. That's all that you have on deposit now, and you must carry it forward to show at the top of the page for your new deposit account."

"I can do that finely," Bobby declared.

"You can if 'Responsibility' keeps at your elbow. A lot of people have all kinds of trouble with their bank accounts—when they balance with the bank at the end of the month they have too much, or too little, and then there's bother in looking it up."

The next day Mr. Hawley came on Bobby as he was poring over his check-book. The boy spoke.

"It'll take a lot of money to send these

checks through the mail. I guess I'll carry them around."

"Why, Bobby," expostulated his mother, "the people live all over town."

"He is not obliged to carry them," Mr. Hawley put in. Something in the situation interested him, for he sat down and silently watched the boy, and noted the quick movement to arise and the queer smile that came as the decision was made.

"I guess I'll carry the checks. I guess my time isn't worth the dollar and a half that the stamps would cost."

"And you have not considered the envelopes you would have to buy," the father said, as with the smile broadening he went outdoors.

The next day Bobby trudged the town over, and at night the boy's disposal of the money was the talk in many of the homes in Thorndike.

"He's John Hawley's son," was the comment. "John's bringing him up in the road he's traveled himself all his life—and a man could not go straighter."

After the boy was asleep Mr. Hawley watched

the sweet, loving face of his wife as she bent over her sewing. Finally she said:

"I'm afraid that we should not have let Bobby carry the checks around. He was very tired to-night."

Her husband leaned forward and ran his fingers over her hair, as he said:

"I think that if I had had a mother who had been so careful of me as Bobby's mother is of him I never would have learned to take care of myself. Bobby traveled this afternoon because he wanted to save money. I have never before seen that trait in him, though I have looked for it long and anxiously."

"Why, John," she said, "you are not disappointed in Bobby, are you?"

"No, rather I flatter myself that we have an unusually good boy. I'm very proud of him."

The trace of anxiety had left her face.

"I'm so glad," softly; "I know that you do not believe in praising him—"

"Because praise never made a man of any one," he interrupted. "When you study him, where is there much that calls for praise? He is obedient and truthful. The praise for that is due to you."

"He's such a dear boy," her flush showing how much her husband's praise delighted her, "and he is smart, too. See how well he did with the lilies, and now see how well he has done in this affair of the train."

"I'm afraid I can not agree with you as to there being any especial smartness shown in this last matter. I am unable to make up my mind as to what induced him to take hold of such a large proposition. I am glad that he did it, and am inclined to believe that it was a quick decision which shows a sign of business genius. As to the lilies, we got some to please you and you sold them. Your sale brought about quite a business. The thing that has pleased me more than anything else is this matter of saving two dollars by a little work on his part. I never saw an indication of thrift in him, before. He has been a very lucky boy—now we want to try to make him a smart boy."

CHAPTER VII

PREPARING FOR THE SUMMER'S WORK. SUGGESTED COMPETITION. THE PICNIC. A DIPLOMAT FOR A MOTHER. BUILDING BUSINESS PRINCIPLES.

IF Bobby Hawley was not popular with the boys of Thorndike it was because he was held up as an example to be copied. Mr. Hawley was much concerned over the fact that his son had no boyhood chums. He was talking with Mr. Bradbury one day about the matter.

"I know that Bobby likes to work with his tools, but I have noticed that if a boy does ever come around, he's willing enough to play."

"He stands in a peculiar place with regard to other boys," the grocer said. "You have taught him how to use boxing gloves, and I hear that there aren't many boys half again as old, that care to tackle him. Of course he's been held up as an example, and you know how that is, yourself."

"It has made him coast and skate alone a good part of the winter," Mr. Hawley returned. "I have been thinking that although he

has done more than other boys of his age, in one way, he has lost a lot of the pleasure that comes with childhood, the remembrance of which carries through life."

Still Bobby had not missed much of a boy's pleasures. He had a real companion in his father and a loving sympathizer in his mother. He had played no pranks at the expense of his neighbors—a feature which is often considered indispensable to boy nature—but observation had taught him more than mischievousness ever could, and he saw clearer and quicker than most of his mates. He could bowl, or pitch a ball, or run a base, and when he was finished with such exercise he was ready to do a little work with his head, and his tools.

The first of March found him busy overhauling the raft under his father's direction. False prows were adjusted and fitted with the high boxes, for lily storage. The entire deck was left unobstructed.

"She would carry twelve people without being crowded," the boy exclaimed, in delight.

Even the logs which furnished the foundation had been tapered at their ends in the effort to reduce resistance. Two coats of paint gave the

craft a natty appearance. A mast and a bowsprit were hewn from straight pines, but they had to cure in the sun, laid across two horses made of wood, and turned every day to prevent their warping.

It was the middle of April before the sails were finished. The ice had all gone from the lake and the launching would not be long deferred.

"You must not expect to have the entire business this year," his father told him. "I shall be surprised if there are not other rafts on the lake. It is known that you made money on the lilies and that's the cause of competition-profits. You may have to reduce the price of your goods."

"But he began the business," Mrs. Hawley remonstrated.

"A long time ago some one began to make sewing-machines. It took an entirely new principle to perfect one, but others improved that principle and made machines, too. Even a United States patent doesn't always protect the discoverer of a thing, and because Bobby thought out something he can't always own it. The lilies are free. There will be competition,

and he will have to learn how to handle it. Of course he will not be driven out of the business if some one else sells them. One-half of last year's profits ought to satisfy him."

Bobby showed that he was disturbed by the possible interference. He was thoughtful all the evening.

"It will be the best thing that can happen if some hustler sets up against him," Mr. Hawley said to his wife, after the boy had gone to bed. "He has never been crossed in his life, and he is getting to take success as something due him. Competition will develop him. He has advantages over any one who could open up the business. He has the privilege of getting orders at the hotels. It isn't likely that the managers will allow two boys to overrun the places."

"I hope he won't get discouraged," the troubled mother remarked.

"He would not be much of a boy if he did," the father declared, quickly.

During the next week the boy was so occupied with his raft that he seemed to give no thought to competition. The craft handled beautifully, and the entire lake was sailed, Mrs. Hawley often being a passenger. There was no great

speed attained but the sharp prow cut the water as a regular boat would have done.

At school, the teacher showed such interest in the craft, that the boy invited her for a sail, and Mrs. Hawley made one of the party on the occasion. The ladies each had a chair and enjoyed the trip; in fact, the teacher's account was so entertaining that Bobby invited the two higher classes to have a picnic on his father's lawn, when he would give them all a sail. Mrs. Hawley entered into the plan when she was told of it, and promised to furnish refreshments. When the mothers of the children learned that there was to be sailing at the picnic they thought they should also go, to watch against accident.

"May-day" was the time set for the outing, and when it arrived, Mrs. Hawley was well prepared for the large number of guests that came. Mr. Hawley and Bobby were on the raft all the afternoon sailing the children, and even the parents took a first trip on the lake when they saw how safe the raft was. Mrs. Hawley entertained on shore, and when all had departed for their homes it was decided that the affair had been a grand success.

That evening the mother said that she had

"MAY-DAY" WAS THE TIME SET FOR THE OUTING.—*Page 82.*

told all of her guests of Bobby's intention to supply the hotels with lilies. Mr. Hawley laughed, as he suggested:

"You sort of gave notice that interference would not be tolerated?"

His wife flushed, and answered:

"Well, I thought that if they knew, they would not let their boys sell, too."

"I guess, to be safe, we should have the whole school over," with a heartier laugh.

"Oh, I think that the people here to-day will spread the news," and the mother's flush grew deeper.

"Bobby ought to succeed," declared Mr. Hawley. "He has a diplomat for a mother."

"I shall do everything I can to keep any one else from interfering with him," Mrs. Hawley replied. "I do not know much about business but I do know what is fair, and as Bobby started the lily-selling I think it is only fair if he keeps it."

Mother and son had many important conferences in the next week. One night at supper the boy told his father:

"I'm going to pick only the largest and cleanest lilies this year. I've been thinking that if

some one else did try the business I might keep my trade by supplying the best."

"That's first-class reasoning," Mr. Hawley acknowledged. He was evidently pleased with the mental progress displayed.

"Perhaps I can hold my price up," the boy continued.

"You can try to," his father agreed.

"I'll be careful not to promise delivery unless I'm sure I will be able to."

"You're on the right track. Furnish the best and just when you agree and it must be a strong opposition that gets your trade away. If the opposition gives just as good service at a lower figure, you will have to come down in your price. Your first move in the game is to work on the line you have declared; then you can watch results."

Beautiful May passed quickly, and preparations for receiving the summer guests were apparent at the three hotels. Bobby was downtown much of the time. The day before the opening of the resorts Bobby informed his parents:

"I bought three pretty vases at Mr. Bradbury's and to-morrow each hotel is to have one

in the office filled with the very best lilies I can find. When I told the managers of my plan to present the lilies, each one thanked me. I am solid now, I guess. I don't think any one else will be allowed inside the houses."

At the time Mr. Hawley did nothing more than to nod his pleased interest, but later he told his wife:

"That was a very good play for Bobby. I must acknowledge that the boy has shown some fine business planning for a youngster, these last few weeks."

Mrs. Hawley's eyes glowed with delight.

"I may tell him you think so, mayn't I?" she pleaded. "He thinks so much of what you say;" then as he smiled up at her, "I know that he is going to do splendidly, this summer."

CHAPTER VIII

COMPETITION. BOBBY'S ANGER AND HIS FATHER'S CENSURE. IN DISGRACE. SUCCESS IN FINDING A NEW FIELD FOR BUSINESS. THE DELIGHTED MOTHER AND THE PACIFIED FATHER. ANOTHER REBUFF.

FOR three days the aroma of the lilies pervaded the hotel offices. The gift of them was a profitable advertisement for Bobby. The managers renewed the supply at market price, and the orders from the guests began heavier than they were in the busiest weeks of the previous year.

Bobby was jubilant over his assured success.

"I've been thinking that I could work the expresses at noon," he told his father and mother, the evening of the third day of rushing business. "They stand here every day from five to ten minutes. I'm going to try it to-morrow. I'm sure that Mr. Marsh will let me."

The boy was at the station when the down express arrived on the following day, and had "worked" it, before the up train arrived.

When he was through the second train he counted his receipts and found that he had three dollars.

The trains alone yielded large daily pay for a boy, even if that boy conducted a business of his own. For the next two weeks, three trips a day was made to the lily beds to supply the demand and even then Mrs. Hawley had difficulty in keeping a display on her dining-table. Mr. Hawley, even, had been brought to think that the last-year business would appear pretty small when compared with that of this year, when something happened that was unexpected, because its possibility had been entirely forgotten.

One afternoon as Mrs. Hawley was standing at the window waiting for her son, she suddenly turned to her husband, her voice betraying anxiety.

"John, I'm sure that something has happened. Bobby looks awfully downcast. I know that he has been disappointed. You'll be real kind to him, won't you?"

She was so sorry for her boy, even though she did not know his trouble, that she put her hand on her husband's, pleadingly. Mr. Haw-

ley covered the hand and put his other arm about her as he answered:

"I'll be kind to him. You know there are different degrees of kindness. Sometimes it is sympathy a boy needs, but a timely correction is as kind as sympathy."

Bobby entered the house at this minute. Throwing aside his cap the boy took his place at the prepared table. Mr. Hawley said:

"You've forgotten to wash your face, Bobby. You must not let money-making interfere with your manners."

The boy went to the sink and washed himself, an unusual impatience exhibiting itself in his every movement. As he again took his seat he said in a surly tone which sounded out of place in him:

"I guess money-making won't interfere with anything, with me, any more. The pond-lily business is done for."

Mr. Hawley began to serve. He asked no questions. His wife, unable to wait for a proper explanation, said:

"Why, what do you mean, Bobby?"

"I've got only three orders for to-morrow, one from each hotel. There's another boy sell-

ing and his price is three cents each. The hotel folks are buying of him, but they said they would keep on with me if I would come down in my price—but I won't. I just won't."

The boy's clenched fist came down on the table with such a blow that his mother started in fright at the exhibition of rage. Mr. Hawley's voice was even as he asked:

"Who is selling?"

"Joe Dayton."

Neither parent had ever dreamed of the latent anger in their boy that was displayed in the mention of that name. Mrs. Hawley said, faintly, because of her great astonishment:

"But Joe Dayton is a poor, lame boy—"

"I'll thrash him, lame or not, the next time I see him," almost shouted the boy. "He's a cur to cut in on me!"

"Is he selling lilies that are as good as yours?" Mr. Hawley's question came in such a cool tone that Bobby glanced sideways at him. Angry though he was, he had not expected immediate sympathy from his father. He answered, with his show of temper not abated:

"His lilies are small and speckled. He gets them at Two-Mile Pond, and there never were

any good lilies there. He's selling them, though—"

"How could that boy ever get out to Two-Mile Pond?" Mrs. Hawley asked. "It's an awful walk."

"But he got there," Mr. Hawley broke in, and his voice caused his wife to raise her eyes appealingly. "He walked out and he walked back. Four miles for a strong person, but eight for a cripple, such as that boy is. He did it, though, to help his mother, who has not been able to sew lately because she is sick. Our boy has an inclination to thrash the cripple. I am not at all proud of our boy's conduct, and the ugliness he has displayed in this first instance of being crossed. I am glad that he has received no orders for to-morrow."

"But, John," pleaded the mother, "he doesn't mean to act this way. He feels so badly. He has been so disappointed, for he thought he would not be interfered with—".

"By what right did he feel so sure?" Mr. Hawley's voice was so hard that Bobby stole another look at him. It was not an angry look but a decidedly crestfallen look. "What has he done to warrant such a thought? I built

him a raft, and you started him into getting money out of selling pond lilies. He used my horse to carry the lilies. Now he threatens to thrash a cripple who walks four miles and offers a few poor things for sale to help his mother. Here are two cases that are found too frequently in this world. One rides to prosperity, the other finds it after a search which would have discouraged the other in a day. I'll wager that Joe Dayton will be a man that his mother will be proud of, some day—as for saying more, I'll wait the decision. The most unjust and contemptible way to meet competition is to crush it by main strength."

Mr. Hawley left the table and the house.

"My, but he was mad," Bobby said. His anger had cooled, completely. If he had had his present view of the matter before reaching home he would not have brought such punishment on himself. He was very much ashamed of his outbreak.

"Not angry, dear," his mother answered, soothingly; "I'm afraid he was disappointed to see you act as you did. He is the best friend that you will ever have, and his judgment is always good. What he says, he means for the

best and I think that you see now that what you said and the way you said it could not help displeasing him. You know that you would not whip that poor Joe Dayton. They have had a very hard time to get along. Now don't say anything more about the business when Papa is around. I think that you will go to work and think out some way to keep right on, and also to get your father's confidence, again."

There followed many unhappy days for Bobby. He forced himself to call at the hotels, though the orders he got were few. He still had the train business, but enough lilies for that could be gathered in an hour. The boy knew that he must come out of his difficulty without any assistance from his father, and he stopped brooding and sought for ways to retrieve himself. He discovered that his competitor did not sell many lilies, but in making a lower price he had stopped trade at a higher. One afternoon he came to his mother and showed her a long paper box. He had been silent and thoughtful for many days, before.

"I want you to go to Marshfield with me tomorrow," he told her. "I have a plan for boxing the lilies and selling them over there."

"I'll be glad to go," she answered. "Let's not say anything about it before Papa. We'll let him see what you can do without help."

There were eight large hotels at Marshfield and in its vicinity, and she supposed that he was going to see them all. It was fourteen miles from Thorndike by the wagon road and she knew that Dobbin could not make the trip every day, so, as they were riding along on that warm July morning, she said:

"You know that Dobbin could not come over here often. He is too old for such hard work."

"I've thought about that," Bobby replied. "You know I have a pass over the railroad, and if I can get a start I'll take orders for lilies to be delivered the next day."

All the wavering faith of the mother became strongly seated when she knew how carefully the boy had planned.

"We're going to have a great day," he told her. "I will call at the 'Winnesemit' and if I do anything there we will put Dobbin up, have dinner, and I will hire another horse to take us to the other places. I shall try to sell from my sample in the box. How is this for a handsome combination?"

He opened his package and showed a cluster of beautiful buds neatly enclosed in oiled paper.

"Aren't they lovely!" she exclaimed. "I know you'll sell some."

"I had the boxes made and they cost five cents each, but I can get them cheaper if I order a large lot."

She sat in the carriage while he went into the Winnesemit House. She wished for his success with all her heart. He was gone such a long time that she was sure he had not failed utterly, and her hope strengthened. When at last he came out she could not restrain herself, but asked:

"Would they buy?"

"I've sold twenty-three dozen," he exclaimed. "The boxes do half the selling. We'll stop here for dinner and give Dobbin the afternoon to rest in."

Such an afternoon as Mrs. Hawley had. A great portion of her pleasure consisted in studying her boy among scenes which were new to her. He was self-contained either in the large dining-room of the Winnesemit or in selling a dozen lilies to a bantering beauty who was up from the city for the summer. She knew that

his experience in the lily business had done much for him, even if he should stop it now.

The day's work counted up thirty-six dollars.

"I've missed the noon expresses," the boy said, as they were driving home, "but I can arrange it all right to-morrow to cover the down train and work the 'up' train while I am going to Marshfield. I have arranged to have neat cards painted and the managers will allow me to put them up in the hotel offices. There are no lilies growing around here, so I guess I shall be able to get along without the Thorndike houses."

That evening Mr. Hawley heard his wife tell the story of the day.

"It's a great improvement on his first scheme, which was to whip a lame boy," was the father's comment.

"And he did it all himself," added Mrs. Hawley, unable to allow the boy to lose one particle of the credit.

Bobby explained the fancy boxes, and his father listened attentively. The sample box had been brought back.

"I chose the pale blue boxes and the cream tissue paper because both colors are in the lilies.

I thought out the ventilation, and four holes are in each box. The dozen-size cost five cents, the two-dozen, eight cents, and I can get five- and ten-dozen sizes. By the thousand, I can get them all almost a third less."

"Who told you about using boxes?" Mr. Hawley enquired.

"No one. I knew that you wouldn't help, and I had to find some way to assist in the selling. I expect that when I get the boxes on the trains I shall hear from the Thorndike hotels. I don't have to have business from them, and if they want my lilies they will come for them. I will not deliver there."

"Well," Mr. Hawley explained, "your mother thought that I was harsh with you, but I think she will acknowledge now that I was right. Instead of sulking and brooding, as you did at first, you have gone to work hard, and made a splendid showing. Take this as a lesson and don't lie down on first sight of a setback. There's always a way out. If you don't find it you'll just stand in with the thousands of failures who have given up before they have really tried. I don't know why you should not go to the Thorndike hotels with your boxes. If

a lady wanted the lilies before, she surely would want them put up in this way."

"Mr. Brewster told me not to come there again."

Bobby flushed as he acknowledged it.

"Told you not to come to the Thorndike again?" Mrs. Hawley repeated, her own face warm from indignation. "John, you'll see Mr. Hartwell about this, wont you? Mr. Brewster is only the manager—"

The lady stopped, confused, and ashamed of her excitement. She saw that her husband had the peculiar expression about his mouth—as if he was amused.

"You were minding your business?" he asked Bobby.

"Yes. I just went in and was starting out toward the piazza when Mr. Brewster called me and said he had decided to let no one sell lilies in the house."

"Did he appear cross?"

"No, but three people heard him, and I felt pretty well cut up about it."

"Of course you did, poor dear," the mother interposed.

"Well," said Mr. Hawley, carefully consider-

ing the matter, and speaking slowly. "Brewster had no right to stop you unless Hartwell ordered him to. I don't believe that Hartwell did that, because he was talking to me about you only a short time ago and what he said would lead me to believe he would not order you out of the hotel—"

"You never told me that, John!" Mrs. Hawley's face showed she expected interesting news. "What did he say about Bobby?"

"I don't think it best to tell." The amused look was still about the father's lips.

"But, John, I want to know so much. Of course I do. Any mother would."

"Well," slowly, "he said that Bobby was such a steady, manly-appearing chap that he didn't wonder his mother was proud of him."

"Why, how did he know?" Mrs. Hawley's face expressed surprised concern.

"I imagine he's seen you together somewhere," replied Mr. Hawley, with a loud laugh.

For an instant, the concern on her face reached displeasure; then she caught Bobby's eye and both joined the father in his laugh.

"I guess I am a little foolish where Bobby is concerned," was the way she dismissed the inci-

dent. The remembrance of the slight to her son returned, however, and she continued, "You'll speak to Mr. Hartwell, won't you?"

"I hardly think so," Mr. Hawley returned; "I don't think that a position brought back through tattling is a very dignified one. Let Bobby go about the business he has and give the hotels here the cold shoulder. I shouldn't wonder if Brewster let him come in later, but I wouldn't ask to go there. Something will turn up, now that he's independent of the hotels."

Something did turn up, and within a very short time. In the first place the box delivery in Marshfield was a stupendous success. The *Marshfield News* had an account of it, and referred to the Relief Expedition which the enterprising boy merchant had started, and carried through, the previous winter. The article in the Marshfield paper had been read by Mr. Hartwell, a vice-president of the C. & A. road, who was bringing his family to the Thorndike for the summer.

CHAPTER IX

DISCIPLINING MR. BREWSTER. NO MAN IS ABOVE BEING CORRECTED. A NATURALLY GREAT MAN DOES NOT LAY HIMSELF LIABLE TO CORRECTION.

IT was Saturday afternoon when Mr. Hartwell's family arrived. The next day he showed the account in the Marshfield paper to Mr. Brewster.

"How is it that the boy doesn't come here with his lilies?" he asked. "He came all last season."

"So few people patronized him that I did not encourage his coming," was the soft reply. "Another boy came, and they were getting too numerous. It disturbed the guests."

"He doesn't appear to be disturbing the guests at Marshfield," was the retort. "You should give that boy the preference, if you allow any one to sell. The road is still under obligation to him for his Relief Expedition. Send him a note and tell him that I want some of his lilies."

A half-dozen men who were present when

Bobby was given his summary dismissal, saw something amusing in the suddenly developed situation. Mr. Brewster was not popular with many of his gentlemen guests. He sometimes appeared to resent a call on his time; but he never was too busy to talk commonplaces with the ladies. He was most attentive to Mr. Hartwell, however, and now said:

"I will get you the lilies, sir, this afternoon."

"It's a case of Brewster eating crow," one of the on-lookers remarked to a companion. "I'll make it a point to be around when that feast comes off."

It was a week before Mr. Hartwell got his lilies. The box trade in Marshfield had developed new conditions. Bobby did not go up every day. He was arranging so that he could take orders on Saturday to be delivered any day designated the following week. This came about through the widely spread territory which was now contributing to his business. People out riding from points as far as twenty miles from Marshfield had seen the cards in the hotels, and were placing liberal orders to be delivered on a specified day at some hotel where they could call for them. On Saturday after-

noon when Bobby came down on the local, his mother was at the depot for him.

"Guess what my orders amount to for next week," he said, as he got into the buggy.

"I know they're considerable by the satisfied look you wear," she returned.

"Sixty-three dollars."

"What is that? Sixty-three dollars!" in a gasp of wonder. "Isn't it astonishing? You had better let poor Joe have all of Thorndike."

"No! I was driven out and I'm going to get the whole thing back if I can—then perhaps I'll step out of my own will."

Even Dobbin seemed to feel the exhilaration that thrilled the pair he drew. He frisked up the street, and Bobby had a tussle to hold him, when, in front of the Thorndike, Mr. Brewster waved for the team to stop.

"I would not pull up," the mother advised. "He may say something that will spoil your day."

"Yes, I'll stop. Father would say that it might have been an opportunity for me."

"Ah, Bobby," came in the hotel manager's suave tone, "Mr. Hartwell asked me to speak for some of your lilies for him."

"I am sorry to disappoint Mr. Hartwell, but I haven't any to sell," was the boy's answer.

"You're in the business, aren't you?" The tone was less suave. Mr. Brewster doubted the statement and believed that the rebuff of a few weeks before was responsible for the boy's attitude.

"I'm in the business, but every lily I can get for next week is sold."

"I think it will be for your interest to supply at least two dozen to Mr. Hartwell."

The tone was hard enough now. Mr. Brewster had seen that the men on the piazza were interested in the conversation. Bobby did not know of his unenviable position, and persisted:

"I shall not be able to supply any more than I have orders for."

He took up the reins and was about to drive away, when the manager made a last attempt.

"I have given you a chance to sell in this hotel again. If you do not fill this order you will be shut out indefinitely."

"I thank you for putting me out of the hotel, Mr. Brewster," the boy returned. "I have twice the business I had before, and do not care for the Thorndike orders."

This time he started, but had not proceeded ten feet before an automobile dashed in front of him. In the car were Mr. Hartwell, his wife and two daughters.

"Hello, boy," called the vice-president of the road. "I hear that you have gone into the export business. It isn't good policy to desert old customers for new. You want to keep all lines taut. Mr. Brewster has been looking for you for days to order some lilies for me."

Mr. Brewster had hurried to the auto, and now interposed, while the men on the piazza craned their necks to hear.

"He tells me that he has so many orders that he cannot supply you."

"Too bad," was the response. "My wife wanted them for Monday evening. She is to have guests, and the lilies that are coming to the hotel will not do. I hope you can find time to get her two or three dozen, at least."

"She shall have them if I can possibly get them," the boy returned, the decision having been brought by a sudden thought. "I guess you can figure on getting them."

The astonished Mr. Brewster stepped aside and the boy drove away.

"I do not know, Bobby," mused his mother. "It seems to me that I would have disciplined that manager a little—"

"Just you wait till I think a little longer," Bobby said, laughing. "Perhaps I'll discipline him after all. You know, he said that I could not sell in the Thorndike."

In the evening his parents got the thought which had influenced the boy in his Hartwell decision.

"I'm going to send five dozen to Mrs. Hartwell by prepaid express and with my compliments. I'll put up the handsomest package that ever went into that hotel. Her guests will see it opened and I shouldn't wonder if I could do business in the hotel without Mr. Brewster's permission."

Mr. Hawley joined in the general laugh.

"Here is a lesson for you to profit by," he said. "No matter how forbidding a man may appear, and how much annoyance his bearing causes you, remember that somewhere there is some other man who can make him feel as uncomfortable as he is making you—"

"Why, Papa, is that just so?" Mrs. Hawley interrupted. "No one could make the Presi-

dent of the United States uncomfortable, and on the line you are reasoning it would appear as if he could be made uncomfortable.''

''I still hold to my point,'' her husband answered. ''Of course the President would not begin the action and so merit the correction—but a little man with half a dozen children and a squalid home could make the President wince if he were able to draw a caricature which would awaken the public ridicule or distrust. No man is too great to be corrected. As for Brewster, a man who so far forgets himself as to give such an unnecessary call-down will show, after a time, how little he is. Always keep at work in a dignified way. Such a man as Brewster has shown himself to be, isn't worth one minute's unhappiness on your part.''

Bobby sent the lilies to the Thorndike that Monday evening as he had planned. In the box was a card, which read: ''Mrs. James Hartwell and daughters. Compliments of Robert Hawley.''

A half-dozen men who were at the opening of the box commented later:

''Mr. Brewster is only beginning his feast of crow.''

CHAPTER X

BOBBY RETRIEVES HIMSELF. "EVERYBODY IS SORRY FOR JOE." "I'M ALL DONE. I'M NOT TRYING TO SELL ANY MORE." BOBBY'S AWAKENING. BOBBY AND JOE.

IN a week Bobby had no competition in the lily business at the three hotels in Thorndike. There was no demand for small, specked buds when the ladies had seen the inside of one of the neat, pale-blue boxes.

The train business had been completely cut out during these busy days, but when he had rearranged his work he decided that he could handle that part also.

The first day that he revisited the depot he found that his competitor had only changed his field of operation. For an instant he was angry with Mr. Marsh for allowing another the right he had enjoyed, but the anger was quickly stifled. He would stop this attempt as he had the other.

He jumped aboard the down train before it had come to a stop and was half-way through

it before the lame boy was aboard. The same tactics were employed on the "up" express.

This warfare continued several days; then he had the trains to himself. On that day he jumped from the down express, and every box he had brought was sold. A surge of exultation passed through him as he thought that he had removed all the opposition in a manly way. For a minute he stood watching the departing train, then turned to see Mr. Marsh standing near him. Overcoming his inclination to go away without accosting the man whom he considered had used him unfairly, he said:

"I've sold out, to-day."

"Yes, and you've won out," was the reply. "You've shown up big, Bobby, in this whole matter. Everybody's glad you've won out—but everybody's sorry for Joe. His mother is very sick and in need."

It was the way it was said that routed the exultation in the boy's heart. He had never given one thought to Joe, beyond the fact that the lame boy was interfering. Mr. Marsh went on:

"I guess Joe didn't make more than half a dollar a day, but that's considerable where

there's nothing else coming in. I'm glad you beat him out fair, because I wouldn't want to take any advantage of a boy like him."

Mr. Marsh went off down the platform. Bobby stood still, shocked and confused, trying to comprehend something which had never come into his mind before. When he at last started toward Mr. Bradbury's store his step was heavy. Mr. Bradbury was in his office and looked up as the boy entered—and took another look, before saying:

"Seems to me you're not carrying around a face that ought to belong to a boy who's fought a big fight, and won. Of course I know it," in response to the quick upward look. "There isn't a man that got any part of the Relief Expedition money that has not been watching you ever since Joe Dayton cut in on you. We've all made suggestions to your father as to what you should do, but he wouldn't let any one interfere. He said that you must fight it out fair, or lie down whipped. The best luck that will ever come into your life, Bobby, came when you were born John Hawley's son. You've worked out your problem in just as honorable a way as he would have done it."

For the first time in his life praise did not lift the boy's heart. There was before him that side which showed a boy and his mother dependent on the little money which he had stopped coming. He was aroused from his thoughts for a second, for Mr. Bradbury spoke again.

"So Brewster put you out of the hotel?"

"I didn't tell that to any one," the boy returned, quickly.

"The guests told it. Hartwell has found out at last what all of us here have known a long time. Brewster's too top-lofty for a place the size of Thorndike. I guess what he did toward downing you won't help him any. Hartwell hasn't any use for a man that will crowd another that's down. Everybody is standing up for you in this fight with Joe because you've done it so honorably. Some boys would have thrashed Joe Dayton out of business—he's a poor, weak fellow—but you worked with your head and not with your fists. You've shown up well."

Every word wrung the boy's heart. He knew that he had not "shown up well." He wanted to be out of doors, but Mr. Bradbury

had taken a seat on a box and went on—his eyes on his hard, knotted hands, which clutched together and seemed to hold the boy in spite of himself.

"It's a big success for you—but everybody's sorry for Joe. I knew his mother when she wasn't older than you are—and before that, too. When she married Tom Dayton, my Dick wanted to marry her; then he went out west and hasn't ever been back since. A year after she married, her husband was brought home feet first, just at supper time. He had bought a horse that day and the vicious critter carried him over Turner's River bridge. Before any one got to him he was dead. Joe was born three months after."

A great sob shook Bobby. Misery, such as he had never dreamed of, bore down on him. Mr. Bradbury's hands tightened. He was not through yet.

"We were all glad you beat out, but just think what that boy was doing to try to get his mother what she actually needed. He went to Two-Mile Pond three times a week. He walked four miles each trip, and every step was such agony that I pray God I may never know one-

hundredth part of it. He was in here half an hour ago and he's discouraged. He said he couldn't sell his lilies because yours were so much better. I asked him how much he got out of a trip to Two-Mile Pond and he told me that he never got more than forty cents because the lilies wilted. Forty cents for such bodily punishment as that! Just think of it! Just think of it!"

Bobby could not stand any more. He rushed out of the store, his hands over his ears to shut out that wavering-voiced, "Just think of it." For the first time in his life he did not want to meet his mother. He went down to the Lake road and started in the opposite direction from home, running along aimlessly carrying a burden of suffocating despondency. He was out of the town; then he became conscious of something beside the weight he carried. Something black had moved, by the roadside. He stopped, confused, and turned full-face toward the place. A boy was arising from a seat on a rock. It was Joe Dayton.

They stared at each other. The lame boy, with a timidity incited by the loneliness of the place and the flush on the face of the stronger

boy, began, his tone showing attempted conciliation:

"I'm all done. I'm not trying to sell, any more."

Bobby did not know what to say. He came over to the rock and sat down. A flush came to the other face at this assurance that there was to be no quarrel.

"Of course my lilies would not sell when your blue boxes came out," the lame boy said. He had waited for some opening on Bobby's part but Bobby did not know how to frame speech on such a surprising occasion. Another pause and the lame boy said:

"I knew that you would be mad if I sold, but I thought I might get money enough to have my leg fixed up so I would be of some help to my mother—then she got sick and I sold to get her medicine. I heard that when Mr. Marsh was going to drive me off the trains your father stopped him, and then I thought that you didn't care, because I only earned a little. You beat me fairly. You got better lilies than I could. Any one could sell the lilies you got."

The right thought came to Bobby so suddenly that his heart thumped.

"You think you could sell my lilies?" he asked with an eagerness which flushed his face.

"I know I could."

"Will you?"

The shadow that crossed the younger boy's face changed from wonder at the new expression on his questioner's to anxiety. Bobby knew what it meant and shouted:

"Don't look so! I mean it! We'll sell together! You'll work the Thorndike hotels, and we'll handle the trains together. I'll do the outside work. I've got to have you! Will you do it? Will you do it?"

Bobby's tongue was rushing without control; then a wonderful thing happened. The lame boy cried—and Bobby, knowing that it was from joy, pulled the worried head over on to his shoulder and cried, too! Cried from very happiness, and peace of mind—and heart.

CHAPTER XI

FIXING UP THINGS. A HAPPY FATHER. JOE'S MOTHER COMES TO THE HAWLEY FARM. BOBBY'S MOTHER'S HAPPY SERVICE.

IN that next half-hour Bobby got very close to his father's old friend, "Responsibility." An eager questioning, prompted by a desire to help, brought from the lame boy his whole unfortunate story. A brave fight had been made until the mother's last sickness—now there was not enough to eat in the home.

"I'll stay around till the afternoon local comes. I carried a salesman's case this morning and got a quarter, and Mr. Bradbury gave me twenty cents for some lilies. If I get ten cents this afternoon she will think I am selling lilies, still."

Bobby listened to the planning, in wonder that a boy's speech could sound so old.

"The carrying the cases must be hard work for you," he said, involuntarily looking at the almost useless leg.

"I forget it when I see my mother smile," was the answer.

"Well, don't bother any more about carrying cases," with a quick-drawn breath of sympathy. The boy had plans, but he needed advice as how to work them, "You come along with me and we'll see if some way can't be fixed that will give us both work on my lilies."

The boy got to his feet, and Bobby saw that even that effort was painful.

"You put your hand on my shoulder and don't step so hard on your foot," he directed.

They came into town in this position. Mr. Marsh saw them cross the railroad track, and he hurried out to the end of the platform.

"What's all this?" he asked. There was a smile on his face as if something pleased him.

"Joe and I are going to work the trains together," Bobby explained. He was flushed, for the weight on his shoulder had been considerable.

The station-master looked Bobby all over. His hand fell on the lame boy's head, and he said in a low tone of pleasure:

"You'll be a great team. The whole of Thorndike will sleep quieter to-night, on Joe's

account. You're showing up bigger and bigger, Bobby."

Bobby was impatient to get to Mr. Bradbury. He had plans, but he needed assistance in formulating them. When they went slowly up the grocery steps the grocer was returning to his office, having just completed a sale. The noise they made when entering caused him to look about; then he came toward them, his lips parted and his eyes carrying surprise.

"Well, say, Bobby! Well, say—what you been and done?"

"I just want to speak to you a minute, that's all." His feverish excitement was well controlled, for a boy. "You sit on that keg, Joe, until I talk to Mr. Bradbury about it. Come along, Mr. Bradbury."

The grocer followed into the office, and his step was as quick as the boy's.

"How'll we do it?" Bobby began in a loud whisper. "Shall we be partners, or how'll it be? We're going to work together so he'll make enough to help his mother with. Suppose I hire him? He'll get his money every week and perhaps that'll be better for him. He was only making a little and I stopped that. I didn't

know about it all—but I know now. How had I better fix it up?"

Mr. Bradbury stared as the questions came at him.

"Well, say, Bobby," he finally returned, feebly, "you ought to talk to your father about this, you know. You're showing up bigger and bigger, but he's the one that ought to advise you. I'm proud that you came to me! By gum, here's John now. Talk about the—Hello, John! Come down here!" shouting through the window.

Mr. Hawley came "down," casting a glance at the lame boy as he passed—a very anxious, large-eyed lame boy. He found two excited individuals in the office, but the grocer was the best able to tell the story.

"Joe's left selling, John, and Bobby's got the coast all clear. Joe's needy. He's been doing terrible hard work to help his sick mother. Bobby's beat him fair and square and we're all proud of him. Joe hasn't any fault to find, for he says himself, he was beaten fair. Somehow they've come together and Bobby wants to give him a lift and I told him that you were the one to go to for advice—"

"I want to give him half the business," Bobby broke in. "His mother's sick and I stopped the little they were having to live on because I didn't know about it. His foot hurts him awfully when he walks."

"And he walked four miles three times a week to Two-Mile Pond to earn forty cents for her." Mr. Bradbury's voice was a groan as he said this.

"He lugged a traveling man's case this morning and got a quarter, and Mr. Bradbury gave him twenty cents for some lilies and—"

"No, no, no, no, Bobby, I, I—"

"Yes, you did!" It was Mr. Hawley who said it and he said it sharply. "You're always doing some such thing. I know all about you, but let's get back to this other thing. Who put Bobby up to doing this with Joe?"

"Not me," declared the grocer, who was plainly relieved now that his own actions were not in question. "I was surprised enough when they came in together, ten minutes ago."

"Who told you?" Mr. Hawley exclaimed, turning to his son.

"No one told me. I got off the train all sold out, and Mr. Marsh said I had beaten Joe. He

was glad, but he said Joe's mother was sick and he was sorry for her, and for Joe. I came in here and Mr. Bradbury said he was glad for me, but he told me about the awful walk Joe had taken three times a week, and I was so sorry that I couldn't breathe and I went into the woods and I found Joe and brought him here. I want to give him back the money I stopped—"

The flushed-faced boy could go no further. Sobs shook him—but he was next staring in amazement. The most wonderful thing in all that wonderful day had happened. His father had knelt before him and taken him in his arms.

"You thought it out yourself?" a strong ring was in the man's voice. "I have worried a lot about you. You have had such astonishing luck in making money and I could not see where it would take you—but I worry no more. Your heart, not your head, will govern you from this out. I owe a great deal to Joe for being the instrument that brought your awakening."

"Joe's looking pretty anxious," Mr. Bradbury suggested. "Couldn't we let him in a little as to what's going on? He just tried to

raise himself to the top of the counter to see in here."

"We'll go out to him at once," Mr. Hawley answered. "We'll have to handle this carefully. I knew Phœbe was sick and Mrs. Hawley has been planning some way to get her over to our house where she could rest, but Phœbe's proud—"

"I guess her pride won't stand in the way now," Mr. Bradbury said. "She's tried and tried, and she's had hard luck enough to make her bless the one who will tide her over until she gets strength to try again. If it wasn't for her love for Joe I believe she would be willing to have the light snuffed out any time. She made a bad mistake once, Phœbe did; and it hit me, too, for it sent my boy away from home."

"We'll have Joe think that Bobby has to have him. That is the way it must get to Phœbe. We'll say he has to be up early in the morning, and that will help Phœbe to agree to be brought over to us. My wife will have her well as she ever was, in a month. Bobby can give Joe a dollar a day while they stay with us and a dollar and a half when they go

home. Phœbe will then be able to do her sewing and Joe will be helping out in good shape. They will be quite independent of any one, and that'll make Phœbe happy."

From anxious waiting, Joe came to the time when he knew all, and his pleasure and wonder, as the plan unfolded, kept him from speaking. When he was told that his mother was also to go where he was so much needed, he kissed Mr. Hawley's hand in gratitude.

Mr. Bradbury had been alternately blowing his nose or wiping his eyes on a large red handkerchief while he listened, open-mouthed; but suddenly he went out into the back store on a run. When he returned he brought a pair of crutches.

"I declare, I don't know why I didn't think of those before," he exclaimed, quite short of breath. "They come on me like a flash. They've been up in the attic for a dozen years. I'll saw them off and Joe can try them."

When the boy had the supports under his arms, a little while later, and was making progress without using his weak leg, Mr. Hawley, watching him, said to the grocer:

"Perhaps if the weight was kept off that leg

"I DECLARE, I DON'T KNOW WHY I DIDN'T THINK OF THOSE BEFORE."

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for some time, it would get strength. Strange some one did not think of crutches before."

"There's a doctor down to Boston that could do something for Joe, I believe," Mr. Bradbury declared. "Next time I go down I'm going to have a talk with him. I've been thinking about it for a month."

He spoke low, but there was no danger that the boys would hear. Joe was moving about faster than he had ever moved in his life and Bobby was keeping close beside him to guard against a fall.

"I could carry cases with these," Joe said. He was experimenting, having caught up a box with which he was traveling about.

"You won't have time to carry boxes," Bobby returned.

Joe stopped his racing. His exuberance over his rapid movement was quieted by the words which meant such full provision for his future.

"I'll go and tell mother," he said, his lips trembling.

"I've got to go up your way," interposed Mr. Bradbury. "I'll take you along;" then in an aside to Mr. Hawley, "I used to see a lot of Phœbe before my Dick went away, and she sort

of knows my ways. I'll have things fixed up so that she'll be ready to go over to your house when you call for her."

When Bobby and his father got home that afternoon they found Mr. Hartwell and his family sitting with Mrs. Hawley on the back piazza.

"This is getting to be a regular thing, this coming up to get a breath of your air," Mr. Hartwell began, as he shook Mr. Hawley's hand. "When you want to sell this place I'll find you a quick customer at your own terms. It is almost beyond belief that such a cool location is in the same town as those hotels down in the valley."

"I look at it in this way; this place is just about good enough for Mrs. John Hawley. I can't imagine my swapping it off for such stuff as money. I suppose that I am the nearest approach to a satisfied man—"

Mr. Hawley stopped in his laughing rejoinder, and his usual serious expression returned, as he corrected himself.

"I should say that I am a positively satisfied man, now."

He then told Bobby's business history to the

interested visitors. He told of his doubts in regard to the wisdom of letting the boy go on, and of his fears of the effect on his character; but now he had no more fears after what had happened that afternoon. Before he was through, Mrs. Hawley had her arms about the boy and was sobbing in happiness.

"It's a noble way in which to settle the matter," Mr. Hartwell declared. "I have heard that there was much sympathy for the lame boy, but he did not have the goods. When Bobby brings him to the railroad hotels we'll take good care of him."

Bobby was facing the man—but he hesitated.

"Say it," Mr. Hartwell commanded, laughing. "It's yours for the asking."

"If you would give Mr. Brewster a talking to instead of making him lose his place in the Thorndike, perhaps he would do better. That's the way my father does with me, and it makes me try."

Mr. Hartwell was too astonished to reply at once, but when he recovered himself, he answered:

"I have given you a promise, and I'll keep my word. Brewster has been told that his

services are not wanted after this month, but we'll give him another chance. He shall know just how it came about, too."

Bobby and Joe were sitting under the window of the Hawley spare room, two hours later. In the bed of the spare room lay Joe's mother. She was very white and still, and her long, beautiful hair, which Bobby's mother had just combed out, covered the pillow. The air, perfumed by wood and grass, came in at the open window, and something else came in—a laugh from Joe.

His mother raised herself and listened as to an unusual sound, her beautiful eyes larger and a flush mantling her pallid cheeks; then she put out her hand and touched that of her self-imposed nurse. In her low voice came:

" 'I was a stranger and ye took me in.' "

The house was still. Joe had gone to bed, happier than he had ever been before. Mrs. Hawley and her boy were together in the sitting-room when everybody else in the house was asleep. Bobby knelt at her side and her arms were about him.

"We can keep Joe and his mother from being poor any more, can't we?" the boy asked.

"We have been more fortunate than poor Phœbe," was the reply. "We can have them stay with us until the mother is stronger, and we will try to think of how we can help them, further. I am a very happy mother to-night—not because I think of how much better off I am than Joe's mother, but a long time ago a man talked about those who were unfortunate. He was such a wonderful man that we read of Him now, in our Bibles. He said: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.' Oughtn't I to be a very happy mother when my boy has given me an opportunity to serve my Savior?"

CHAPTER XII

BUSINESS IN FULL SWING AGAIN. BOBBY RECEIVES A TIP ON THE TRAIN. PLANNING ON A NEW BUSINESS. WAITING THE DECISION OF THE ROAD.

JOE'S eagerness to learn his duties aboard the raft, and his delight in the new life which had opened to him, gave Bobby an almost equal share of happiness. The lame boy's mother could not restrain the tears of joy as she listened to the glowing account of his experiences.

Bobby notified the hotels that orders would henceforth be taken by his assistant, and it seemed that the customers appreciated a chance to express sympathy for the latter's unavoidable failure in business, for the orders jumped so much that in three weeks new business was paying all additional expenses. Joe used Dobbin in filling orders, and the eager, serious boy got around so nimbly on his crutches after he left the team that, although few thought of the sympathy in the case, all were glad to give a lift to such a patient fellow.

Bobby saw that he was completely relieved

from the home business. He extended his operations until he had ten regular hotels awaiting his coming, in and outside of Marshfield, and cards in windows of private houses advised him that lilies were wanted there.

He had gone back to daily runs into his outside territory, leaving home sometimes in the morning, at other times on the noon express, according to the trip he was about to make. He had a fast horse awaiting him in Marshfield, and he often did twelve miles an hour on its back, including stops.

One afternoon towards the beginning of October, he was coming down on the local when his attention was caught by some conversation in the seat in front of him.

"It's a long ride," one man said; "the company should have a place at Thorndike where a person could get a small lunch, at least. In the winter the trains are late a good part of the time and I have about starved before I got to the city. It's too long a stretch to cover without a break, to eat. Some fellow will take a chance and start a restaurant in Thorndike, sometime, and I think he'll make good."

In a flash Bobby had solved a problem which

had been causing him disturbance for some time—a position for Joe after the lily season had passed. When he arrived in Thorndike he went to Mr. Bradbury with the new idea.

"I'd run a business of supplying lunches if I only made expenses," he declared. "It would keep Joe with me. I wouldn't want to be without him in a lily season, again."

"Now here's a singular thing," Mr. Bradbury announced. "Mr. Marsh and I were talking about that day before yesterday. He'd been thinking that Joe would be out of a job in the winter, and so had I, and here you come with a scheme to make everything right. Marsh told me six months ago that there was complaint from passengers because there was nothing to eat nearer than the city. About half my time when I am very busy has to be given to serving drummers and other people who want ginger pop, or a piece of pie, or crackers and cheese. Now I wouldn't wonder if there was a good thing for both of you for the winter months, at least. Talk it over with your father. You'll get some good advice out of him."

Bobby had the talk with his father that evening. Mrs. Hawley had taken Joe and his

mother home at the first appearance of the Hunter's Moon, and was helping put things to rights before leaving them.

Mr. Hawley heard the plan, and Mr. Bradbury's comments on it, without interruption.

"It would take quite a lot of some woman's time, baking pies and turnovers and making coffee," was the father's first remark. "I couldn't have your mother do it. She and I have both worked hard enough in our lives to have earned a rest."

Bobby was up immediately with a brand-new idea.

"Joe's mother can cook for us."

Mr. Hawley hesitated before continuing, looking all the time into the grate fire. At last he resumed:

"That street car line will be opened to Brandford in November and there would be some business brought in by that." Suddenly he straightened himself up in his chair, "I'm inclined to think that the plan is a good one. That man on the train said that somebody would do it, sometime, and I believe you had better be the some one."

"I won't say anything about it to Joe."

Bobby's first impulse on attaining anything was to give full vent to excitement. "I'll surprise him. Won't he be tickled, though?"

"If I were in your place," his father continued, "I would figure it out in this way—You have made a good deal of money on the lilies this year and you can afford to take a chance at an investment. See if you can get the right of the road to handle papers, and things to eat at this station. An exclusive right, which will not allow any one else to sell anything in the station. You want to pay something each year, say one dollar, or five, or ten—but something. If you don't have a consideration in the contract the road can put you out with a few weeks' notice. You have Mr. Henderson and Mr. Marsh as friends—"

"And Mr. Hartwell," put in the boy.

"Yes, that's so. Now that exclusive right is an asset that would help sell the business. It won't be so great a risk, for if you get tired of it, there's always some one who is looking for a business chance. If you secure the right, for say ten years, you can afford to put up an attractive house and open a regular restaurant."

"Don't say a thing about it, even to Mother," the boy stipulated. "We'll surprise her, too."

Bobby broached the matter to Mr. Marsh the next day.

"Yes, Mr. Bradbury and I were talking about it this morning," the station-master acknowledged. "I'll speak to Mr. Henderson. If you do anything in building I would not wonder if the road made you put up a pretty nice place. There's plenty of room for a good structure just south of the station. Henderson'll be up to-day, likely as not. I'll see what I can do for you."

All that afternoon the new enterprise was in Bobby's mind. He was sure that he could make a success. When he got home from Marshfield he went to Melenson the contractor and arranged for him to look over the ground and see what kind of a structure could be erected south of the station, and at what price.

The boy wanted so much to tell his mother that finally his father suggested that she be brought into the secret. The lady exclaimed, ecstatically:

"That will be a real business! Joe's mother

would not have to sew. It would be much more healthful for her in the restaurant.''

''You would have to pay her all that she could make sewing, and more,'' Mr. Hawley interposed, ''but let's hear what Mr. Henderson brings you for news on the exclusive right. No use planning any more until you know about that.''

During the wait for news, Joe was working steadily. Every day gave evidence of improved health and greater efficiency. In the morning both boys gathered the lilies and worked the north-bound local. Bobby then arranged his work for the hotels up the road while Joe delivered at the Thorndike hotels. Together they handled the south-bound express at noon, after which Bobby worked the north-bound, and at the same time got to Marshfield.

In the afternoon Joe went for what lilies had been ordered for late delivery, and almost always his mother, and sometimes Mrs. Hawley, went with him. It was a healthful trip for the one, and the other had never ceased to enjoy the rides on the raft. Joe delivered his late orders at six o'clock, and the day's work was completed.

One afternoon, when the wait had lasted a week, Joe's mother said, as she stepped from the raft:

"I shall not have many more sails. Mrs. Pickering has sent for me to come and sew for her three days of next week."

"I wouldn't go just yet," Mrs. Hawley returned quickly; "rest another week."

"But I feel that I must go to work," with a worried expression. "I have rested a long time."

Then Mrs. Hawley told her the secret, concluding with:

"John thinks that we shall get the right. The baking will take most of your afternoons, and when you feel like it you can go down and 'tend in the restaurant. It will be more healthful work than if you were sitting at home alone, sewing. You ought to be worth more to the business than you could possibly earn sewing. I wasn't to tell you about it until we heard from Mr. Henderson, but you have plans to arrange too. Don't tell Joe about it. Bobby wants to surprise him."

"I feel so grateful to you for being so good to Joe," the young mother said. "He has had

so little happiness in his life that he is living in a paradise now. He was saying only a few evenings ago that his work would stop soon. I will help out Mrs. Pickering, because I promised her I would—then I'll wait as anxiously as Bobby, to learn about the restaurant."

That evening, Mrs. Hawley, after silent reflection, said to her husband:

"Dick Bradbury never married, did he?"

"No," was the answer. "When Phœbe married Tom Dayton it broke Dick up, completely. Henry says he has never wanted even to talk to a woman since. Dick thought he was sure of her, but he was too overbearing, and Phœbe jilted him on the impulse of the moment. He had told her he wanted her to marry him. He should have asked her to. Henry says he is rich. His entire life-work has been just making money."

"I think," Mrs. Hawley had dropped her sewing and was gazing dreamily out on the moonlit lake, "I think that Phœbe is prettier and more lovable than when she was a schoolteacher, even. There's something so quiet about her. I think, too, that if Dick Bradbury saw her as she came off the raft, this afternoon

—those great eyes of hers expressing such gentle love because of Joe's happiness, and her cheeks tinged with the color from her ride on the water—he would move back to Thorndike."

"You might write and suggest that to him."

But his wife had resumed her work without responding to his bantering mood.

CHAPTER XIII

THE RAILROAD GIVES THE RIGHT AT THORNDIKE STATION. JOE PROVIDED FOR.

MR. MARSH brought his wife out to the Hawley farm to make a call the evening after Joe and his mother went home.

"Have you heard from Mr. Henderson?" asked the impatient Bobby.

Mr. Marsh laughed, as he replied:

"Well, let me sit down, won't you? You don't seem to remember that I'm standing up all day and a little rest does me good sometimes."

That was the cue that the reply had arrived, and the entire Hawley family made preparations to receive it.

"Mr. Henderson says," began the tantalizing station-master, "that as much as he admires Bobby, the railroad couldn't think of making a contract with him. He's under age and the instrument wouldn't bind."

Bobby had begun to walk the floor before the man was half through.

"But," resumed the narrator, and Bobby stopped, "the road will, at a nominal charge, make a contract with John Hawley, and will grant an exclusive contract if he will be responsible for any damage which might accrue to the railroad from explosions, or other unforeseen occurrences having origin in said restaurant and—"

"But that's all we want," broke in Bobby. "Father is just the same as I am. I couldn't do it if he didn't want me to, anyway, because I'm a minor—"

Mr. Marsh laughed heartily at the boy's excitement.

"You've got to curb that boy, John," he said. "If things don't go along down there as fast as he wants them to, I'm afraid he'll tip over the depot."

"Bobby must control himself," Mr. Hawley agreed. "Tell the rest of the conditions; and Bobby, you hold your comments until Mr. Marsh is through. You're wasting energy that might be put to more profitable use. One of the most important requisites in a business man is the ability to wait until he hears all that is to be said on the matter which concerns him.

You'll save months of time during your life by doing so, and also, you will not confuse the subject."

"That's a strong point in Dick Bradbury," Mr. Marsh went on. "Hartwell says he never saw Dick's equal in getting at the foundation of a thing, nor anywhere else such quick action when the foundation is discovered."

"Mr. Hartwell knows Dick, then," Mrs. Hawley interposed. Her husband turned a quick glance on her and said:

"Mrs. Hawley thinks that if Dick could see Phœbe to-day he would move back to Thorndike—"

"I guess not," the station-master's wife put in. "Dick was a very angry man when he left here. Phœbe's made an awful mess of her life. I never had any patience with her. I guess she fully knew what she'd done when Tom Dayton bragged in the engine house, before more than twenty men, that he had cut out Dick Bradbury and John Douglass—"

"Mercy!" exclaimed Mrs. Hawley. "Was there another one?"

"Didn't you know about John Douglass?" Mrs. Marsh asked, in her high, thin voice.

"That's because you've always lived up here out of the way, like; but we down in the town, know about everything that's going on."

"I guess you do," Mr. Marsh acquiesced. Mrs. Marsh was known the town over as Thorndike's most famous gossip. The lady did not notice the interruption, but continued, delighted at Mrs. Hawley's uncomfortable interest.

"When Phœbe chose Tom, Dick went west, but John Douglass stayed right here. Tom was a good-looking boy but he was awful weak. In a month after he married, John Douglass had him wound around his finger. He got him speculating, and what not. He loaned him money and took his notes and he got a mortgage on Tom's house. He worried Phœbe a lot."

"Did you know about this?" Mrs. Hawley asked her husband.

"Yes," was the answer.

"Oh, it was all Phœbe's fault," Mrs. Marsh resumed. "Dick Bradbury is the president of a bank, a director in a big street railroad and in two or three steam roads, has the biggest wholesale hardware business in the west—and he is interested in forty other things besides owning real estate enough to make any one

man rich. And Phœbe might have been Mrs. Dick Bradbury. She knows she made a mistake—"

"Like as not if she had taken Dick they would have settled right here and run his father's grocery store," Mr. Marsh suggested.

"And if they had Phœbe would have been some better off than she is." The last remark given as a final judgment on her argument. Mrs Hawley did not follow up the subject. She knew by the way her husband had given his "yes" that he wanted the conversation turned to another direction, and she said, when there was a chance to speak:

"I suppose Bobby wants to know all there is to know about the agreement with the railroad—"

"How long will they make an agreement for?" Mr. Hawley interrupted.

"Well, I asked about that," Mr. Marsh answered, laughing, "and Henderson laughed at the time and stated that they would not make a railroad agreement to last ninety-nine years, but they would give the right for twenty-five years."

"That's quite satisfactory," Mr. Hawley de-

clared. "We can meet all their requirements, and I suggest that a contract be drawn up at once. Bobby has some figures from a carpenter, on a nice building. I think it will satisfy the road, and Mr. Henderson will be shown the plans and can approve them, or change them, as he sees fit."

Shortly after, the visitors left.

"So it's settled," Bobby exclaimed. It would have been difficult to tell which was the more pleased, he or his mother.

"And you are at last a real business man," she said.

"With real business cares," put in Mr. Hawley. "This building expense is only the beginning. You must have fixtures and the company will want you to have presentable ones. You will have to carry an insurance expense and the town will tax your establishment. You must try to curb your impatience now, for as likely as not, you will have a deficit at the end of the first year; but you worked out of a pretty bad situation in the lily business and the experience ought to be worth something to you. You have got to learn that everything will not fit just as you want it to, at first.

You must depend on yourself, mostly, for Joe is not a strong boy—"

"But he is a great fellow to think," Bobby declared. "It was he who arranged how we would handle the home business and the Marshfield end at the same time."

"I'm glad you give him the credit. Any one who begins by claiming that he does everything will become so egotistical, and finally so narrow-minded, that he won't be able to see beyond himself. Such a person will lose a lot of opportunities, for he will not get any help from an assistant who is denied the credit of what he does. An assistant will not care to mention the opportunities he sees, if he knows that his advice is not appreciated."

"I wanted to tell Joe to-day," the boy said, thoughtfully. "He was pretty quiet, and once he asked me when I thought we would be through selling lilies."

"Don't keep the poor boy in a worry any longer," entreated Mrs. Hawley. "He is wondering what he will do next."

"Well," Mr. Hawley suggested, "he couldn't properly be told to-day because nothing was settled until to-night. That's another thing

you must conquer as a business man—your impulsiveness. Don't give a plan away until it is matured. You remember that Mr. Marsh calls that feature Dick Bradbury's strongest point."

"I was surprised to hear that Mr. Hartwell knew Dick," interrupted Mrs. Hawley.

"Nothing surprising in it. They have business interests in common. Dick is pretty well thought of among men of affairs. I guess Thorndike people would be surprised if it were known just how rich he is. I was at Henry's store when the expresses came in this noon. Henry always goes to the door and stays there, on some pretext or other, until every straggler has come away from the station. I don't believe he'd wait on the Governor at that time."

"He isn't expecting Dick, is he?" asked the wife.

"He's been expecting him for the last ten years, and he'll keep on expecting until he comes. Dick writes often, though, if only to say that he is so busy he can't get away. By the way, Henry told me to-day that he is going down to Boston next week and he will see a specialist about Joe's leg and foot. If it is

thought advisable, Joe will be carried down, later.''

''Oh, I wish he could be helped!'' Mrs. Hawley said. ''Phœbe would be so happy. You tell him all about the restaurant, Bobby, tomorrow.''

Bobby divulged the secret as the boys were driving to the depot in the morning. Joe listened in amazement as all the perfected details were explained.

''I'll tell mother, can't I?'' was his first exclamation.

''She's known it all for a week,'' Bobby answered, laughing.

''And she never said a word to me about it,'' in incredulous wonder.

''We were surprising you.''

''I was a pretty bad boy to work against you,'' the tone one of sober reflection. ''I wonder sometimes why you ever gave me a chance at all.''

''It was a good thing when you and I came together, and we wouldn't have come if you hadn't given me the tussle you did; besides I've got a chum, now, and I never cared to have one, before.''

"It's awfully good of you to say that."

"To think it, too, you ought to say," with another laugh. "We're going to have a sign on the restaurant that will read 'Bobby and Joe's.' "

Joe's face flushed.

"That wouldn't do," he said. "It's yours."

"But you'll be there. A lot of people know you and your name will help. Your mother is going to be with us, too. She's promised to do the baking and help at the counter, and she's going to be paid for it, so quit your worrying, right now."

Joe's eyes were brimming with tears of pleasure.

"I did worry," he acknowledged, "because I'm not of much use at heavy work—"

"Well, you fit in here, all right," Bobby declared.

CHAPTER XIV

JOE GOES TO THE HOSPITAL. PROGRESS IN THE RESTAURANT BUSINESS. DICK BRADBURY.

ONE evening Mr. Bradbury brought his wife to call on the Hawleys. It was quite an effort for Mrs. Bradbury to get so far from home and Mrs. Hawley was accordingly flattered and pleased.

"It wasn't my idea," acknowledged the grocer's wife. "Henry's been down to Boston today, and he's so excited about what the specialist says about Joe that he couldn't wait to see Mr. Hawley in the morning."

Here was news to interest every member of the Hawley household. They all drew up chairs.

"I told him all about Joe, as far as I knew," began the grocer. "I wish that I had had a talk with Phœbe, just before going, but I was afraid that nothing could be done for the boy and I didn't want to raise hopes in her that might be, after all, only disappointing. From what I could gather in the hundred or more

questions the specialist asked, there's a good deal more than an even chance that Joe might get entirely cured, while it's a sure thing that a contraption can be supplied by this Doctor Brainard, which will stop every bit of pain when the leg is walked on."

"What a pity we haven't known about this," Mrs. Hawley mused. "Just think of all the awful time that boy has had—"

She stopped, for her husband's hand was on her shoulder. He had been watching the sweet sympathy in her face and a grim smile of pride and admiration was now curling his lips. Mr. Bradbury went on:

"I told the doctor Joe's circumstances—but I also said—that there were a few friends up here who would like to help him—and the doctor, who is not so very big in size, but has a heart big enough for two men, just turned me off the subject and said his first desire was to do for the boy, and if there was a time in the future when the bill could be paid, all well and good, and if there wasn't—it was all well and good as far as he was concerned, just the same. He is a strange man—so quiet and thoughtful, that if he put his hand on Joe and told the boy to

walk, and Joe did walk, cured, I wouldn't be at all surprised. You know, it's been done, since the beginning of things."

"Well, you finally said that his friends would pay?" Mr. Hawley was nothing if not a very practical man.

"Yes. I knew that I could figure on you—"

"Joe will be able to pay it all himself, in time, and he will want to do it. We'll advance him what it costs."

"Mrs. Hawley had better prepare Phœbe for Joe's going away to-morrow," Mrs. Bradbury suggested. "She'd better tell her just how good the chances are, hadn't she, Henry?"

"Yes," the grocer replied, "I don't see any harm in telling it all to her now. It's the doctor who gives the opinion, and I'll vouch for the fact that he isn't one who talks for the sake of talking."

Gentle hearted Mrs. Hawley performed her mission with such tact, that Joe's mother's fright was changed to an anxiety to try the specialist's treatment, and Joe went away with both Mr. Hawley and Mr. Bradbury, the next Monday. Bobby told him just before the train started:

"Nothing for any one to do here just now but the contractor. The lily business is done for until another spring. You do just what the doctor says, and don't get impatient to see your mother. Write a letter to her every few days though, or she'll be down there, sure. You're going to come back with your leg and foot cured. Father says so, and he doesn't make mistakes."

Such assurance would have bolstered up a much less gritty boy than Joe. He went away with a brave face, and his last wave of the hand was for his still badly frightened mother, who was at once taken to the Hawley house to stay until her boy returned.

An anxious two days passed for the mother before the men returned, then with tear-flooded eyes and trembling lips she heard how Joe had undergone the breaking of a bone in order that the treatment might be properly started—that he was bound in casts and must remain in one position for two weeks.

"He'll have to stay there two weeks after that and have constant attention, but you may consider that the worst is over," Mr. Hawley said. "Joe is full of grit, as any bright boy would be who could look forward to the time when he

could walk as well as any one else. His last message to you was that you must not worry, for there was nothing now to worry about.''

Rapid progress was now being made on the restaurant building, and Joe's mother was consulted so often on what must be done to make things handy for her that she was very busy. Every day a letter came from Joe, brimming with courage, and confidence in the absolute success of the operation—such cheerful letters, in fact, that his mother could throw off all apprehension and give her mind to the work which was before her, then her waiting ended.

When Joe got home, what he saw served to put a restraint into his first greetings. In the midst of a great litter, there stood a beautiful building with a sign in black and gold under the eaves, and it was just as Bobby said it would be:

BOBBY & JOE'S

It seemed to the boy that the entire town was out to meet him, but in all the crowd he saw only his mother and he gazed at her in amazement. The four weeks had converted her into the most beautiful person he had ever

looked on. Total absence of financial worry, and out-of-door air, had indeed wrought such a change in her that Mrs. Hawley was not the only neighbor who insisted that she was prettier than when she had taught the grammar school. Joe got down off the train without help and without a limp. He did not use crutches, though he walked slowly and cautiously. The clamor of the greeting from people whom he had never spoken to, as well as from his friends, almost amounted to a cheer. He walked to his mother and took her in his arms; then, his part of the exhibition over, he took his crutches and went into the new restaurant.

"What do you think of it?" Bobby was shouting. "We have worked like sixty to get cleaned up before you got here, but we couldn't do it. The shingling bothered. We started up a little to-day and sold everything your mother baked. Everybody thinks it's fine. We're going to have oyster stew and a lot of such things. I told your mother that you would scheme out some way in which we could carry the hot stew right into the train."

Joe was listening, his smile showing how in-

terestedly. As the plan was unfolded which showed how his value to the business was to be accounted, his restraint went immediately. He could think, if he was not yet strong enough to act. That very evening he went to work and his part was so well executed that "Bobby and Joe's" became famous before winter really set in. The oyster stew for train-selling he solved by serving in a paper bucket on a paper platter, on which also was a paper saucer of crackers and a pinch of salt and pepper. A bright tin spoon completed the arrangement, which was so attractive that Mr. Hawley was moved by admiration for it.

"The whole outlay is seven cents and we get fifteen for it," Joe explained.

"They make a great team," Mr. Bradbury declared. It was on one of the many afternoon consultations in the restaurant. "I wouldn't wonder if they made so much money that Joe would buy in, after a while. His name's on the sign, so everything is ready for it."

For just an instant the brightness went out of Joe's face—the idea seemed so impossible.

It was Joe who designed the birch-bark baskets in which entire pies, and quarter-pieces,

and cake, were sold, and as the holiday season approached there was a large demand for such edibles from the city, by people who had passed down the line at some time or other and who remembered the lunch at Thorndike.

There was no doubt about the success of "Bobby and Joe's" when, in the latter part of November, the street railway line was opened between Brandford, on the Western Division of the C. & A. and Thorndike. By this the two divisions of the railroad were connected by twelve miles of trolley cars, where before, a roundabout way of sixty-five miles via Hillsboro was necessary.

One afternoon Bobby sent one of Joe's packages of oyster stew to Hillsboro, by the noon express, for Mr. Henderson, and when the Division Superintendent received it, he at first smiled, but later walked about his office, his hands clasped behind his back, his forehead wrinkled in thought.

The first of the year saw the business still on the increase, and the *Marshfield News,* in a "New Year's Edition," gave almost a half-column to "Bobby and Joe's."

The article went back to the competition in

the lily business and made quite a story of the coming together of the boys. It also told of the brave fight against adversity that Joe's mother had made; then it finished by exalting the "youngsters," whose attention to business, and uniform courtesy, had raised their restaurant to the position of "one of the best known enterprises in the county."

A newspaper is the nearest thing possible to a human brain. It keeps one informed on every subject, and it works surprising conditions. One of the copies of this issue of the *Marshfield News* was taken to the post office that day with many others. An experienced clerk was standing with a circle of well-worn mail pouches about him. All the pouches were suspended from iron racks so that their mouths would be kept wide open, and they stood as straight as a healthy boy.

The mail clerk would take a paper and throw it, without even a glance at the gaping mouths, so practiced he was; and when a bag was filled, it was taken off the rack and replaced by another. This especial copy of the *Marshfield News* was thrown into a bag, and when that

bag was filled it was tied and sealed, and carried to a mail car which came down on the afternoon local. That bag rode two days and three nights, then that car was set off the train in a city, out west.

It was dark at the time, but many wagons were awaiting the arrival of the car, and that bag containing the copy of the *Marshfield News* was carried to a great post office, and assorted into a certain carrier's route. When people in that city were going to their day's work, that carrier went along his way answering many a hail, because everybody knows a mail carrier. After a while that carrier came into a beautiful, tree-lined street and went up to a great residence and rang the bell. A maid came and took the paper, carrying it to a handsomely furnished room where it was laid on a desk with other mail matter.

The copy of the *Marshfield News* lay there all day, then a quick-stepping, busy-looking man came into the room. Taking the chair at the desk he ran his hand over his mail. Except for the light which shone down on the packages and the flickering of a grate fire the room was somber in its loneliness. The maid did

not appear. There was no sound of children's voices from anywhere in that great house, nor any sign of children's mother, to throw a gleam of color into the handsome, lonely place.

The man was like one who was accustomed to thinking and working alone. He opened letter after letter, many times putting the *Marshfield News* aside to get at more important things. At last he had finished all the others and tearing the wrapper from the paper he settled himself into a large chair and began the perusal of the first page, taking more time in the occupation than he had spent on any other paper or letter.

He started on the second page, and in course of time was reading the article on "Bobby and Joe's." He read it all through, carefully—about the lily business—the coming together of the boys—about the inception of the restaurant business, and about Joe's mother, and her patience and courage, for her lame son's sake.

When it was all finished the paper dropped from his hand, as if he had gone to sleep, but instead, his gray eyes were gazing steadily into the grate fire—then he roused himself and

taking the paper again read it all over—away down to where it told of Joe's mother, and her patience and courage, through her love for her crippled son.

That copy of the *Marshfield News* had worked a condition, as surprising as the most eloquent man could have raised. The man in the chair bowed his head in thought. In the new attitude he did not appear as one who would rather think, and act alone, but it seemed as if he were listening to something which had come back from long ago. After a time he arose and began to walk about the room, his hands clasped behind him; then he spoke to the grate fire:

"I'll take time, and go home and see father and mother."

If Henry Bradbury, the grocer at Thorndike, had heard this soliloquy, he would have been pleased enough—for the man was his son, Dick.

CHAPTER XV

A December storm. Mr. Henderson offers Bobby the management of all the Division restaurants.

That was a great winter for the restaurant business at Thorndike. In every station within twenty miles placards whetted the travelers' appetites by such reminders as,

"If you have eaten one of 'Bobby and Joe's' pies, you ought to try their grape or quince preserve, or one of their hot oyster stews."

If the traveler did not know who "Bobby and Joe's" referred to, some regular frequenter of the road was sure to enlighten him, and by the time the train reached Thorndike he was prepared to join in the rush into the pretty restaurant.

"It beats all what a business they're doing," Henry Bradbury commented. He had come over with John Hawley to see the expresses arrive. "And they hitch together so well. They're chums, as well as partners."

"It's because they respect each other," Mr.

Hawley answered. "Neither is capable of doing a mean thing. It's the way through life—if a couple come together that are open and honest with each other, whether it's in married life or business, there will be no separations, and but few differences. The pity of it is that people don't have a chance to study character enough, and you see a fine character hitched up with a mean one. There are cases where the fine one refuses to be lowered to the level of its mate's; but you know how it is if you mix New Orleans molasses with Black Jack—the goods are deteriorated. The boys are so well mated that I'd like to see Joe getting more out of the business than he is. Bobby would like to take him in on halves. It isn't business-like in him, but I would not object if I did not know that Phœbe would not stand it. She's paying Mrs. Hawley so much a week on the board for the time of her sickness and while Joe was in Boston. We don't want her to, but she will. She would look at our taking Joe in as a favor because of her hard luck. She said recently, that she was perfectly happy, and quite independent. I'd like to see them getting more from the business, though."

That conversation took place on the tenth of December, and before another day had gone something happened which made Mr. Hawley more desirous than ever to have the boys on equal partnership basis.

A severe snow-storm set in after the expresses had passed on, and at night when the branch train from Burlington should have come in, she was reported stalled, twenty miles away. The "down" local which would take the Burlington train's passengers, was reported an hour late. The "down" local got in, and for a time business in the restaurant was as brisk as at noonday.

At eight o'clock when Mr. Hawley came to see what was detaining Bobby, he carried Joe and his mother to their home. When he arrived back at the station, he found that a big "Mogul" type of engine had come up from Hillsboro with a snow plow, to assist the train on the Burlington branch, and the Division Superintendent had come up on the "Mogul." Mr. Henderson was talking to Bobby. Mr. Hawley heard the conversation, which ran:

"We can bring the train in in two hours, I'm confident. I'll send the down local to Hills-

boro and take the Burlington branch passengers through, and connect them with the twelve o'clock flyer at Hillsboro. They will be about starved, though, when they get here, and mighty disappointed if you are closed."

"They won't be disappointed," Bobby ejaculated. "This place doesn't shut up as long as there's any one to be fed."

"Good!" exclaimed Mr. Henderson. "You've had experiences with snow-storms before. I forgot that for the minute."

The busy man went out of doors and soon the local was on its way down the line. The great "Mogul" then crept through the station and started out on the branch. The people in the restaurant came to the door to see the plow throw the snow from the track.

"There's no cut that could fill tight enough to hold that outfit back," Mr. Marsh said. "Henderson isn't one of those men who direct from an easy chair, that's sure. He gets pretty close to the difficulty, himself. I wouldn't be surprised to see him the general manager of the road, sometime."

The "Mogul" brought in the train, arriving at Thorndike at a quarter to eleven.

"Don't charge them for what is eaten. Send the bill to the company. Fill them up so they will not think of the delay—which has happened through no fault of theirs."

These were Mr. Henderson's orders, and for once the customers in a railroad restaurant took their time. Complaints changed to jokes over the situation. Mr. Henderson brought in the railroad crews and got them to eating, then he said to Bobby:

"I want about ten minutes' talk with you."

"All right," said the boy. "My father has taken hold, and I can spare you fifteen minutes, if you want it."

"What will you charge to take our three eating-places and make them pay?" came the query.

Bobby was too astonished to answer for a minute. Mr. Henderson continued:

"I want some one who will do at Greenfield, Burlington, and Rochester, just what you've done here. I've watched you ever since you sent me that oyster stew, and I think you are the man for the job. If we can come to terms you can take hold of the proposition at once.

Think it over, and give me an answer in two days."

It was a satisfied crowd that finally got back into the train. The bell sent out a muffled clanging, for the snow was still beating down, hard. The furnace doors of the "Mogul" opened and let out a flare into a thick, snow-swirled atmosphere. The roar of escaping steam was checked, and the huge machine drew out the train.

Bobby saw it all as one in a dream. He could only hear Mr. Henderson's last words, "Think it over and let me know in two days." It was all so astounding. He had been offered the management of every restaurant on the division.

CHAPTER XVI

DICK MAKES A MERCHANT OF JOE. SCIENTIFIC FINANCE AS VIEWED BY JOE'S MOTHER.

JOE'S mother knew there would be a run on the restaurant when the belated train got in, and she baked far into the night in preparation for the following day's business. When Bobby came for them the next morning he had the light wagon, for he knew the buggy would not take down the food.

When Mr. Henderson's offer was told them, mother and son viewed the situation in consternation.

"What shall we do at the station?" the mother asked.

"We'll have to fix it up in some way—if I go," was Bobby's reply, and it was given in such a matter-of-fact tone that the incident was suddenly belittled into something far less than the calamity it had at first seemed. Joe thought it all over and when they had arrived at the station, said:

"I'm glad for you. Mr. Henderson has a lot of confidence in you."

"Well, if I take that job you'll have to look over the field with me," Bobby returned.

During the forenoon Mr. Bradbury was told of the offer from the road, and he said to Mr. Hawley:

"Now if the boys were partners, as you suggested, this thing could be straightened out easily. Bobby could hire some one to do his work, here, and take the other restaurants. I'll see Phœbe and explain it to her, and I'll find half the money to buy with. It's a safer investment than half the schemes that's put onto us up-country fellows."

That was the way it was left, but another condition was working to the benefit of Joe, of which his older friends knew nothing.

The "down" express arrived first, next day, and its passengers had poured into the restaurant and were seated, when the "up" train came in. From the last train, a man stepped, and after standing a minute looking at the restaurant, and over across the street, he went into the pretty building. All the tables were filled, and the man went to the counter behind

which Joe's mother was busily at work, and waited to be served.

There was a heightened color on Joe's mother's face, for business had been unusually heavy. When she got to the last customer she looked up for his order. A flare of crimson chased the pink from her cheeks.

"Dick?" she said; then, "Mr. Bradbury—"

"No, Dick," in a low tone, to dissipate the interest of those near who had heard her surprised exclamation; "I'll order later, as you are very busy. I'm not going out on the train."

Joe's mother seemed to have too many thumbs after that. She apologized profusely, but without that her customers would hardly have taken offense. She was usually so cool that it was quite an interesting experience to see her so flustered. Even Joe finally noticed an agitation in her movements.

"I'll take you home as soon as the trains get away," he said. "You're tired. You worked too long last night."

"Why, Joe, I'm just as well as I could be. Don't call attention to me. I'll get over making mistakes."

She was really more collected, but the color

came back, when, twenty minutes after the trains had pulled out, Dick Bradbury returned for his dinner. Joe was counting the train receipts. The customer came to the counter.

"Wouldn't you find it more comfortable at one of the tables?" Joe's mother asked. Joe looked up at such an unusual remark.

"No," was the answer.

"You can have a steak with French fried potatoes—or—" The color was actually irritating to the woman. She knew it was there but she could not help it. Besides, it was not her restaurant voice that she talked with. Joe knew that, because he looked up again.

"I'll have the steak," the order came.

When the food was ready she brought it, then going to Joe she put her hand on his shoulder and led him over to the counter. There was pride and beautiful love in her eyes as she said:

"This is my Joe."

Dick Bradbury's steak was untouched. He sat looking into the large serious eyes, so like hers, which did not fall before his gaze. Both were serious faces. Finally a smile moved the corners of the man's mouth. He said:

"He's a fine boy! He looks like you!"

Joe wondered at the pleasure in her eyes at this last. He was waiting an explanation to it all, from her. She gave it.

"It's Mr. Bradbury's son."

"Dick?" the query came with eagerness. The boy's hand was thrust out, then he flushed and withdrew it. His eyes fell.

"Yes, Dick," was the response, and the man's face bore an interested look, now.

"I oughtn't to have said it." Joe's natural quietude had returned. "I was glad because Mr. Bradbury has been waiting for you so long. I called your name as I hear him speak it, often."

That was the beginning of a strong friendship between the man and the boy. Dick Bradbury stayed about the town a week and his interest in Joe increased with each interview. Afternoons, when the business rush was over, the two traveled around town together, Joe taking his crutches when a long tramp was suggested. Henry Bradbury's delight at having his son was a beautiful thing for the boy to see, and he thought that it must be a good son who could bring such contentment to the face

"This is my Joe."—*Page 169.*

which had so often looked with kindness on him.

One afternoon the boy and man were out in the fields together. They were sitting near the river, a mile out of town, near where the railroad bridge crossed. Dick had been scanning the view. Finally he said:

"I have seen this place in imagination, many times in the last dozen years. When I was a boy it was deeper, and I used to swim here. The walks to and fro, in the lazy summer afternoons, before I knew much of responsibility—or disappointment—have come back to me very often. There used to be a little gully across where the shade trees are, where we used to get quahaugs, and bake them. I take it that you have never had such times—" suddenly turning to the boy.

"No," slowly, "but I like to hear you talk of it. Until your father and Mr. Hawley took me in hand, I had to get about slowly, and I needed all my strength to help mother."

"You've done more than many a strong boy would have done. What will you do when Bobby goes?" suddenly.

"Perhaps he won't go."

"I think he will. I have heard it talked over at the store. A new field has opened to him. Opportunities will arise now which could never come through the Thorndike restaurant. A boy should put his whole heart and brain into the thing which is occupying him, but he should always be on the lookout for a chance to better himself."

Dick watched, as the boy thought over it. Finally the answer came:

"Mother and I worried when the pond-lily season was closing, but we have not since. We will stay in the restaurant, here. Bobby says we both are needed."

"This business has been making money. Why don't you buy into it?"

"We haven't any money to buy with."

"Couldn't you hire money on your half?" Dick suggested. "From fifty to eighty dollars a week is being made, above every expense, so Mr. Hawley tells me. You and your mother are drawing twenty-seven. If you owned half you would receive twenty-five more, at the lowest profit. Twenty-five dollars a week means thirteen hundred dollars a year, and that amount is six per cent on twenty-two thousand

dollars. If you had twenty-two thousand loaned out at six per cent, you would receive thirteen hundred and twenty dollars each year. I think that Bobby would like to have you buy in with him, and as you have made half the business, he would let you in for five hundred. That's all it has cost, so far. Now see how this would figure if you bought. You would be paying thirty dollars a year on interest and you would have thirteen hundred that you do not have now, to pay it from. If you paid one hundred out of that thirteen hundred against the amount you borrowed, you would own your half, clear, in five years. Your interest expense would decrease six dollars a year, because you take the hundred from the face of your note every year."

Joe was very silent. In his security over his mother's present unworried position, he had not thought of practical finance. This plan at first seemed stupendous to him, but after the explanation he found himself thinking that it might be possible.

"You think that if a man was shown what the business was earning he might loan the money?" he asked, hesitatingly.

"Men do nothing but loan money for a business, often. I think this would be considered a good risk."

"But—but a boy? The man might be afraid to take a boy's word—"

"The loaner would be secured. He would take a mortgage on your half. When the money was all paid he would have to release the mortgage. I think, however, that the loaner would not be afraid of his borrower when it was told him that he walked four miles a day on a frightfully painful foot, in an effort to help his mother. It was awful pain, wasn't it, Joe?"

"Yes, sir," Joe answered.

"Well, we're talking without accomplishing anything," hurriedly. "I'll loan you the money. You have the scientific financing of the matter. I'll forward you a check as soon as you want it. Come, is it settled?"

Joe could not answer. He could hardly believe he had heard right, but Dick's quick, business-like handling was very convincing. Dick continued:

"When we get back to town I shall take the

electric cars and get over to Brandford. I'm going away to-night. Now is it settled?"

"How can I thank you?" the boy began as he grasped the large hand which had come down on his. His voice was choked by repressed sobs.

"There's nothing to thank me for. It is a business arrangement from which I shall get my share. Is it settled?"

"I'll do it," in unusual excitement. "You say that Bobby should make his change because there are opportunities—and you are making an opportunity for me. My mother will be so glad. You'll come and see her before you go, and she will thank you better than I can. She says you and she went to school together."

Dick was looking off down the river.

"You want to look out for her, Joe. She is working pretty hard. There's apparatus that you might get that would make your mince-meat and save her labor. A range in the restaurant would produce so much that she could do all her work there and have her evenings to rest in. You can buy all such things on time

and the interest, and the sinking fund to pay for them would not cut into your profits much —besides, that business is going to grow, and with the proper tools, you will not have to hire so much help. A range which can bake forty loaves of bread at a time leaves a lot of time for the cook to do something else. Study scientific financing. When you get stuck in anything, write me. You might write me, anyway. Will you?"

"Every week," the grateful boy exclaimed.

"And you could tell your mother that if she hears of anything which might interest an old schoolmate, she might add it to your letter. I won't have time to see her, as it will be late when we get back. Come, I'm glad this thing is settled."

When Joe arrived at the restaurant, Bobby and his father were talking together, and Mrs. Hawley sat at the table. Joe's mother was busy behind the desk. She looked up as the boy entered, and there was a strange expression of indecision in her eyes. Bobby called:

"Come over here, Joe. It's decided that I shall take the restaurants. Father says I ought to. I hate to leave you, but I'll get

some one to do my work here, so you won't have to do any more than you do now."

"Dick, Mr. Bradbury's son, told me about it," was Joe's reply. "He said that you wanted me to take a half-interest here, and he is to furnish the money and take a mortgage on my part."

Mr. Hawley burst into a loud laugh.

"That's Dick Bradbury, all over," he declared. "He heard us discussing the matter and he was planning all the time. While we talked, he closed the deal. Well, it's settled, and everybody ought to be satisfied."

"Wasn't it lucky I had the sign made to read 'Bobby and Joe's'?" Bobby said, as he gave Joe a whack on his shoulder.

Joe's mother had heard what had been said about Dick, both by Joe and by Mr. Hawley, but beyond that she knew nothing of what was being planned. She felt that something was going on that she was being left out of. So when Mrs. Hawley went to her and gave her a hug and asked her if it wasn't all splendid, she said, "Yes," but that indecision which had been in her expressive eyes was now in her voice. She did not understand it at all. She knew that the

buying she had heard spoken of must be greatly to her benefit, however.

While she was baking that evening, and Joe was fixing up his accounts, and helping her, he was also giving her full information of the deal.

"Now isn't that wonderful!" his mother exclaimed, a raised skillet emphasizing her full comprehension. "I always thought people oughtn't to borrow anything. You know, Mrs. Williams used to borrow sugar and pepper and what not, of me, and she never remembered to return anything—but it seems that when you borrow money it's different. You borrow money to make more money with. The surprising part is that you can pay back borrowed money without taking out anything from what you already have, but you get it from the more the borrowed money makes, and that is different from sugar and pepper and things."

Joe looked at her a minute. She was an enraptured, very lovely woman, and understood enough to make her extremely happy.

"And then," continued Joe, "we own half of the business and after five years we can sell it for a great deal more than I am to pay. Bobby

would never have sold to any one else at five hundred for the half. We helped make the whole, and that's how we got the half so cheap."

"Well, it's just splendid, as Mrs. Hawley said. If we had known how easy it was to do, we would have done it long ago."

Bobby looked up at her again, and explained:

"We had to have something to borrow the money on, you know, and we have not had the chance to buy the half and then borrow on it, until now."

There was a pucker in her forehead as she held up her dough-encumbered hand to designate positive and full information.

"Oh," she said, "now I see. There's an awful lot to it when you come to think of it all, isn't there? Perhaps Dick—perhaps Mr. Bradbury's son will explain it to me carefully when he comes in, to-morrow—"

"He isn't coming in to-morrow. He's gone back west."

"Oh!"

It was said differently from the other "oh," which had designated the acme of comprehension. It was a surprised "oh," and there was no pink color in her cheeks when she said it.

For the next hour she was so absorbed in her baking that she did not speak, then she peeped into the dining-room to see tired Joe sound asleep, lying over on the table, with his head on his arms.

"Bless him!" she ejaculated, and all the lovely color came back to her face as she hurried for a pillow, and lifted the heavy head into a more comfortable position.

CHAPTER XVII

JOE HAS AN ATTACK OF SCIENTIFIC FINANCE, AND WRITES A LETTER.

MR. HENDERSON'S proposition was to pay Bobby one hundred dollars a month for six months. If at that time there was not a marked improvement in the receipts from the restaurants they would be discontinued, and dining-cars put on all through trains. He said emphatically:

"You have eight expresses a day at Greenfield and twelve locals. Any one of our points should pay far better than your Thorndike station."

"It looks to me that it's a case of the right man for the job," Mr. Hawley commented. He had heard the proposition.

"That's the condition in a nut-shell," returned the superintendent.

When they were alone, Mr. Hawley said to his son:

"There is a splendid opportunity here, for

you. Now you want my old partner, 'Mr. Responsibility,' to keep close to you, and you will win."

"And I'll see that Joe isn't very far away," commented Bobby.

That same night Joe was writing a long letter to go out west.

"What in the world can you be saying to him, that takes such a long time?" his mother asked. She was baking, as usual. The boy looked up, and asked:

"You bake six loaves at a time, don't you?"

It was no reply to her question, but she answered:

"Yes, I bake twenty-four in an evening."

"How many pies?"

"Twelve custards and twelve mince. I never have enough."

"That's what I'm writing Dick about. He says that anything that can earn, should be bought, and he says that the first cost of a thing is not the only part to think of. Now suppose we had a big range down at the restaurant that would bake forty loaves of bread, and twenty-five pies, and roast a leg of lamb, and a chine of pork, and a sirloin of beef all

at the same time, while kettles of vegetables are cooking on top, and hot closets are keeping food warm. Then suppose you had a motor which would chop your mincemeat, churn ice-cream in summer, beat the eggs, and do all that kind of work—what would you think?"

The mother was staring in amazement.

"I don't think you are well," she exclaimed, at last. "You must stop that figuring."

"I'm writing to Dick about such a range. I've told him that Mr. Marsh will let me have the use of the coal-room at the station and will let me build a covered way between it and the restaurant. With these improvements you and I and the boy that Bobby hires could do the work when we have three times the business we have now. If we don't improve, we shall have to get some one else to cook, and that will mean some one else to do other work, and that would mean twenty dollars a week, at least. Twenty dollars a week means ten hundred and fifty dollars a year. That is the interest on seventeen thousand dollars at six per cent. Our new machinery would cost not more than four hundred dollars, and we would have it paid for in four months by setting aside a hun-

dred dollars a month—while in paying for help we would be giving out money forever."

"My goodness, no wonder you're sleepy, evenings, if that's the kind of work you're doing. How long have you been studying all this up?" The mother was quite unable to conceal her admiration.

"I got it all from Dick. His scheme is that a man can make more money by using his head than he can if he only puts hands and feet at work. Now I want you to write something to him, right here at the bottom of the letter."

"Oh, I couldn't," in blushing confusion at the suddenness of the peculiar request; "I don't know anything about such things as you and he talk of."

"I don't want you to write about that. Tell him anything that an old schoolmate would like to hear. He wants you to."

She thought a long time, and he watched her as the color came and went; then she took the pen in her fingers, on which there was still a little dough, and she bent over him, and put her cheek close to his and wrote, "I thank you very, very much for being so kind to my boy." "Will that do?" she asked, with a timidity, and a wist-

fulness in the question, that stirred the heart of sober Joe. He thought her lovely enough for any boy to be proud of, and he kissed her lips; then reading her message again, returned thoughtfully:

"Well, it is not just what he told me to have you write, but I guess it will have to do."

His mother put her cheek on his again, and turned away his eyes that he should not see her burning flush.

"You haven't signed it," he said.

"No," came a faint response. "How would you sign it if you were I, Joe?"

"I'd sign it—well, when you were schoolmates, what did he used to call you?"

"Oh, no, that wouldn't be right. I was only a girl then—

"Just sign it Mrs. Thomas—

"Oh, Joe!" in a flurry over such a wonderful discovery, "I'll just sign it, 'Joe's mother,' because he knows me better that way, now."

The letter went out on the noon express the next day, and it took such a journey as the newspaper had, sometime before. When Dick read it in front of his grate fire out west, he

laughed, and he wrote a reply, and drew a check, and carried the sealed package to the mail-box at the corner of the street, even though it was late, and on a chilly night.

CHAPTER XVIII

Joe becomes a "real business man."

When the check arrived, Joe carried it over to Mr. Bradbury's store, for he had seen Mr. Hawley and Bobby go in there when the former had come from the post-office with his mail. With Mr. Bradbury, they were all sitting in the office.

"We were talking over things," the grocer said, as he entered. Joe used his crutches but little nowadays, but his walk was always slow and cautious.

"I've got the money," Joe said. "I thought I would tell you what I would like to do before it's all settled, and see if you agreed to it."

Then he told them all his plans about improvements, explaining the financing, and the saving which could be made as the business grew. He was listened to attentively by the men, but Bobby was not yet schooled to keep his patience when such wonderful developments were under discussion.

"My, but you're a schemer!" he interrupted. "I won't feel so badly if I fall down with the other places, if we're pushing things like that up here."

"When the range goes into the shed," Joe continued, "we'll do our broiling there, too. That will give us its place for an ice-cream stand and a soda fountain."

"The Fisher Drug Store in Marshfield is closing up business," Bobby informed them. "There's a fine fountain there that cost two hundred and fifty dollars. They will sell it for sixty, I heard."

"Better go up and see it," Mr. Hawley advised, and Mr. Bradbury thought the right thing to be done was for Mr. Hawley and himself to ride over, that afternoon.

"It might be sold," he suggested. "It's too good a bargain to hang on long."

That put the sanction of the entire party on the improvement plan. Joe was very much pleased.

"I explained it all to Dick, and he agrees to it," he said. "He furnishes the money, and I did not want to do anything until he said it was all right."

"I'm going to break Tom Bishop into my place," Bobby advised. "He's a hustler and he'll do what you want him to. Now if you had this job of mine, how would you go to work at it?"

"I guess I would go over to Greenfield and look it over a bit," Joe answered. "I would find out how things are being done at present, and I wouldn't tell any one what I was there for, or who I was. I would go in with the crowd and order a meal and notice what I got and how it was served. I'd first get a general idea of everything about it—then I would come home and talk it over with you."

"And that's the very thing I will do," Bobby exclaimed. He was apparently much relieved.

"There must be something wrong when a place will not do well where there is a chance to serve eight expresses and twelve locals," Joe argued. "Don't you get nervous over what you find out. The place can be made to pay. I think the railroad must be having some pretty poor help. Just imagine this place with four times the expresses that we have."

The consultation broke up with everybody satisfied with everybody else. Joe went back

and told his mother that his plans were to be worked out in every particular.

"I've paid the money and have got a bill of sale from Bobby and Mr. Hawley. Now I'm a real business man."

The next morning Tom Bishop started in to learn. Bobby coached him for three days and he was so well initiated that Joe and Mr. Hawley went to Boston to look over the various apparatus which would be needed in carrying out the improvements. When they returned the second morning after, there was so much to tell of the things which could be accomplished when the new tools were installed, that Bobby declared:

"If I had known about all this when I agreed to take hold of the other places, I wouldn't have promised to do it."

CHAPTER XIX

BOBBY GOES TO HIS NEW FIELD OF LABOR. SHORTY. THE EVENING AT THE THEATER. A GOOD DAY'S WORK.

WHEN Bobby alighted from the afternoon local at Greenfield, on the occasion of his first visit to his new field of labor, his first impression was one of astonishment over the stillness of everything at a junction station during a train arrival.

Beyond the movement of passengers and baggage there was no excitement whatever. The new manager took a look into the restaurant, which occupied space three times as large as was used at Thorndike. Two purchasers stood before the fruit counter, and in the farther corner he could see that a few people were seating themselves at tables. There was no evidence of the hurry which had been a part of his own place on train arrivals, even in the earliest days of its opening.

"I wonder if Joe had any idea of such a con-

dition as this when he told me not to get rattled,'' the boy mused.

A noise came at last.

''Have a shine?'' a voice called.

Bobby looked around at a freckled-faced, red-haired boy, who shouted:

''Come, be a sport! Shine up!''

''I will,'' Bobby answered. In the few minutes it would take, he would have a chance to think how he would best begin his work.

The bootblack worked diligently, but gave an occasional upward glance at his customer, who was not very much older than he was. Bobby thought that he was inviting conversation, and said:

''Business good?''

The upward look now contained a blending of contempt and pity that made the customer smile. The answer conveyed the same contradictory sentiment.

''Business is roaring. The only trouble is, we're all deaf 'round here and can't hear anything. This is one of the off days, though, and just as soon as I get you shined I'm going up to the club. If you want to take a ride 'round the town I'll get out my auto.''

Bobby laughed. It was his first experience with a street urchin.

"How many shines to-day, so far?" he asked.

"You 'n' another fellow 'n' two drummer's cases. That's the business to-day."

His sportive attitude had vanished. The disgust on his face seemed to enlarge his freckles.

"I don't see how you keep your auto in good condition on such business as that," Bobby rejoined.

The boy caught the humor in the suggestion, but did not respond to it.

"Well, say," he declared, "this place has had the services said over it but ain't got the push to give itself a decent burial. This is the limit, this is. I've got my eye peeled for something better, all right."

"How long has it been dead?" Bobby asked. It had come to him that he might learn something by simply sitting quietly in the bootblack's chair.

"Began to gasp three years ago. Petered out entirely about a year ago. There's a story floating that a new deal is coming off in the restaurant. That's what I'm hang-

ing 'round for. There might be something doing for me."

Bobby wished the shine had but just begun. He knew he could get valuable information from the boy.

"I hope you find something," he said.

"The place wasn't always on the blink," the boy continued. "My mother was cook here once and she had to hustle—but she got bounced."

"Bounced?" That expression had not reached Thorndike.

"Fired! Turned off! When the new manager came in, he had Henderson hypnotized. He was going to find everything, and give the road half profits. Well, say! The road hasn't got a cent out of the place for two years. The new man let me keep this stand, but fired mother."

"Here, Shorty!" came a shout. "Get my bag out, will you?"

"Say, boss," the bootblack said hurriedly, "are you in a rush? I can get a nickel for giving that gent his bag."

"I'll wait," was the reply. "Go for your nickel."

The boy was off, and back again in a few minutes.

"I got it," he exclaimed. "That's as good as a shine and it comęs quicker. Harris, that's the baggage-man, goes away sometimes, and he puts a card on the door that tells any one to see Shorty. That's me."

"Is Shorty your first, or last name?" Bobby asked, laughing.

"My name is Raymond Jones, but the drummers don't know it."

"What did the new man bounce your mother for?"

"Every new man bounces the old help, don't they? My mother is cooking over at the 'Burnside.' Going to stay in Greenfield to-night?"

"I think I may," Bobby replied. He had come to the conclusion that his job could not be done in half-day jumps.

"Don't stop at the 'Burnside.' It's buggy over there, but you can get a first-class feed there. Half a dozen of the old-timers go to the 'Burnside' every time they come to town. Ben Libby travels for a big cloak house. He runs in as soon as he gets in town and he says to the waiter, 'Tell Mary that Ben Libby's in

town,' and the waiter tells Mother and she knows just what Ben wants for dinner. It's Mother's cooking that keeps the 'Burnside' restaurant open."

Bobby was silent during the remainder of the shine. He had formed a plan and it concerned Shorty. When he was paying the boy, he asked:

"What time do you get through here, Raymond?"

"Sh—" the boy warned, looking about. "Don't call me that. The drummers would guy me if they heard I had such a handle hitched to me."

"Well, Shorty, then," laughing.

"I guess I'm through about this time—unless you want to hire a fellow who can guide you through the city, and show you the places of interest—I'll carry your bag, too."

The half-patronizing air, mingled with the evident anxiety to secure employment, made Bobby laugh heartily. Shorty plainly saw encouragement, at least, in this, for he went on:

"I'll take you where you can get a meal that is a meal."

"Well, I'll just go you," Bobby decided.

"It's about time to eat. I'll hire you to see that I don't get run over in your busy city this evening. I'll give you fifty cents to take care of me until I want to go to bed, and I'll pay all the other costs that happen."

"I'm for the job," promptly. "If there's so much as a speck of dirt on your shoes when I get through with you I'll take it off in the morning for nothing."

"For the first thing: I want to see an express come in. I'm from the country and want to see how big the trains are that go through here."

"Well, say, you're lucky to have me around when there's expresses. You just get back in that chair and I'll have an express go right plumb in front of you in a few minutes. The five twenty-three is due here, going east. Jim Bolster is 'up' on the machine and you'll see him give a dive over to the 'Burnside' as soon as he makes his stop."

"Why doesn't he get something to eat at the depot restaurant?" Bobby wanted to know.

"Well, say, Jim's the carefullest driver on the division. He ain't taking any chances to have his insides give a flop on him, with three

Pullmans and half a dozen coaches behind him. Well, say, a fellow went into the restaurant last week and ordered steak and he swore he found a slab of the stuff they make in the Hillsboro paper-board factory in it. If a fellow ordered anything in there he wouldn't get in time to eat more'n a nubbin of it. Trains don't wait. There's your express, stopping at the water tank. She'll roll in in three minutes. You stick right in that chair. You own it up to ten shines."

"No, I'll poke around a bit. I'll come after you when the train pulls out."

Shorty appeared pensive; then he grasped Bobby's arm, asking, with poorly concealed anxiety:

"Well, say, you hired me for the evening, didn't you?"

"Yes." Bobby's voice showed his surprise, and the boy was partly reassured.

"You'll come back, honest Injun?"

"Sure's you are standing there."

The train was coming into the station. Bobby hurried to the front end of the platform, and for the next fifteen minutes he studied a most surprising condition. He heard the train

men call "Greenfield," and saw some men standing on the lower car-steps, but when the train stopped these men made a rush for the lower end of the station and he saw them buying fruit of a peddler. He was not long in deciding that it was no common occurrence, but that the peddler had been seen as the train had crossed the street.

Eight people went into the restaurant. There were more than two hundred on the train. An old gentleman and lady got off a car, and asked a policeman the way to the eating-house. It was pointed out, but the officer followed a few steps, and after a hesitation, stepped quickly after them and advised them not to order food which would take time to prepare.

When Bobby went in among the diners, he discovered an unsavory smell about the place. It was dimly lighted, and he thought it about as lonesome a room as a hungry man could come to. The girl at the cashier's desk was chewing gum, and looking untidy. The one waitress was calling for her orders, and occasionally she sent down a remonstrance through the order tube.

The stop was to be ten minutes, and Bobby went out to the engine to be near when the engineer returned. Shorty was there, waiting, and as he approached, said:

"Here's Jim Bolster coming back. Wait till I talk to him. Say, Jim, I've been telling this gent that my mother used to be cook here."

"She did," returned the grimy big man. "And it would show some brains in some one if the company got her back again."

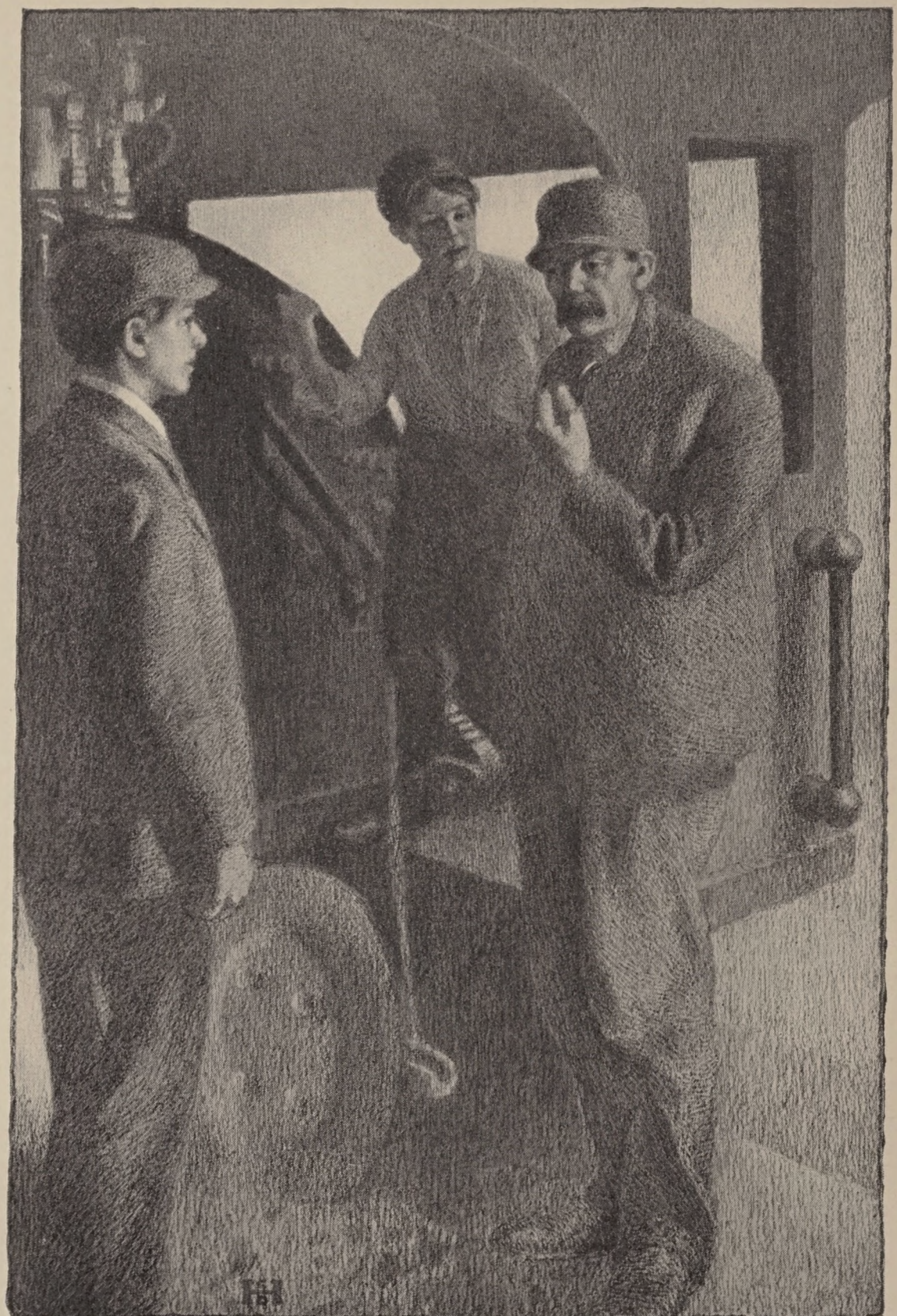
"There!" Shorty was intensely satisfied by this corroboration of his statements. "What did I tell you?"

"This ain't the new manager, is it?" Bolster asked, with a grin. "Say, if you're the manager and you want the railroad men's vote if you ever run for governor, just get Mary Jones back into that kitchen."

The quick and totally unexpected turn in the direction of the conversation had brought a flush to Bobby's face. Shorty came promptly to his assistance.

"Don't be giving the gent any guff, Jim. He's an all-righter. He's hired me to show him the town, this evening. Ain't you?"

"Sure," Bobby returned, and he knew that



"SAY, JIM, I'VE BEEN TELLING THIS GENT THAT MY MOTHER USED TO COOK HERE."—*Page 200.*

the question was asked to get a further assurance of the promised employment.

The train pulled out, and thinking there was no further need of watching such somber business application, Bobby said he was ready for the evening's entertainment.

"Name your excitement," Shorty directed. "If it's the theater, there's something going on at the Olympic to-night. If you want billiards, or pool, Murphy's Great Western's the joint for that. If you like to dance, Higgins's Casino's got everything else 'round here skun a mile. Twenty-five for gents, fifteen for lady."

"Say," interposed Bobby, who had not been giving full attention, "does Jim Bolster eat the same thing, every day?"

"Not on your life. He orders his meals through the telephone from a junction thirty miles up the line. When he gets here it's all set out for him, and all he's got to do is to eat it. My mother looks out for that, all right."

Bobby was silent a full minute. Shorty began to show signs of impatience. Finally the question came:

"How about the trains running the other way. Do the men eat at the 'Burnside' also?"

"Dave Johnston hauls the 12.15 'up.' He calls from Hillsboro, forty miles east. Ed Skinner runs the freight that gets in at eight in the morning. He calls from Hillsboro, too, and there you are. You be down at the 'Burnside' at eight, sharp, to-morrow, and you can see how it all works."

"I'll be there," Bobby replied. "Now I'll telegraph my folks that I'm not coming home to-night, and then we'll look around a little."

"I'll go home and get some better togs on." Shorty was at a point of high elation over the security his evening's work had assumed.

They went to the telegraph office and then to Shorty's home, a cottage in the business district, near the railroad. When the guide appeared next, he presented an improved spectacle.

"Not bad?" he asked.

"Fine," Bobby exclaimed. "Now we'll go to the 'Burnside.' I pay for the suppers."

"Well, say," Shorty ejaculated, joyously, "you're the real thing, all right. I've heard tell of this kind of business, but I never run up against it, before."

Bobby's satisfaction with the food at the

'Burnside' was so complete that Shorty was delighted.

"Wish I could show her to you," he said, "but nobody's allowed in the kitchen during meal hours. I'll tell her about you, to-night, and to-morrow morning I'll get her to come to the serving door and have a peep at you."

"And do I get a peep, too?" Bobby asked, with a laugh.

"I'll fix it up if I can," was the answer. "I guess she'll come out when I tell her what you've done for me."

"What's at the theater?" Bobby wanted to know. He had never been at a place of amusement larger than Thorndike town hall, and the question came with interest. Shorty brightened perceptibly, as he answered:

"It's a play called 'Little Em'ly.'"

"Out of 'David Copperfield'?" Bobby exclaimed, in delight.

"Well, I don't know what they got it out of," slowly, as if his reputation as a guide was being put to a test, "but there's a man named Mike Cubber in it and he's great. I heard Stevens, the ticket-agent, telling Harris he was there last night and he said it was a hunky

show and when he wasn't laughing he was crying."

"We'll take it in," was Bobby's comment.

"Ten, twenty, or thirty?" Shorty wanted to know.

"What's that?" Bobby asked.

"That's the price," in astonishment. "Ten's up in the gallery and thirty is down on the okkestry."

"We'll have the best."

"Well, say," with a delighted chuckle, "you're a nabob, all right. I never was in the okkestry. I'll see that mother gets a peep at you, all right, in the morning. She'd never believe I went to the okkestry if I didn't bring you 'round to prove it. We'd better go up and get the tickets, or they'll shove us behind a post and we can't see anything."

Such a possibility was enough to start them off in haste for the tickets. On the way Bobby told something of the book, "David Copperfield," which he had read three times. In his interest Shorty would get in front of the narrator, thus impeding progress until the incident was told to the end, then he would exclaim:

"Say, I'm in it all right to-night, all right."

After the tickets were purchased, under a verbal guarantee to Shorty that "there wasn't any slats in front of the seats," that excited individual suggested that they go to the hotel where Bobby was to stop that night.

"I'd just as lief carry the bag, but you ought to get your room. The 'Gloucester's' the tony house, but the 'Northampton's' good, too."

"We'll go to the 'Gloucester,'" Bobby said.

Shorty was silent while on the way to the hotel. Occasionally he gave one of his upward glances. When the room was engaged, the clerk asked:

"Will you go up to your room, Mr. Hawley?"

"Yes," Bobby answered.

A uniformed bell-boy took the grip. Shorty was falling back to await his new acquaintance's reappearance, when he was called.

"Come along, Shorty," and the bootblack followed.

"Now this is something like," Bobby exclaimed, as he surveyed the apartment he was to occupy for the night. "Don't you think so, Shorty?"

The bootblack did not answer. Bobby tipped

the bell-boy with a dime. Shorty gave a start as he saw it. The bell-boy withdrew.

"Say, you," Shorty began, "who are you, anyway?"

"What difference does it make?" Bobby asked, laughing.

"It's all right for you to be slamming 'round in this way, ain't it?" Shorty had doubt in his tone. "You ain't been doing anything off color to get all this money?"

"I know just what I'm about," was the answer. Then suddenly, "Don't you be alarmed about me. I've done just about ten times as much as I expected to do when I started out on this trip, thanks to you."

Shorty had begun to pace the soft carpet, his hands in his pockets.

"I guess you're all right," he commented. "I wouldn't like to wake up and find this was a dream, though."

Bobby's laugh was so hearty that the boot-black was infected by it, and he continued:

"By jiminy, it's the greatest snap I ever caught on to. I guess mother'll want to take a peep at you, all right."

They arrived at the theater at half-past

seven, although the performance did not begin until eight o'clock. It was an interesting experience to see the crowd come in. Shorty announced the arrivals in a hoarse whisper. He seemed to know everybody, by sight and reputation. Finally he said:

"Keep your eye down in front of the stage and you'll see the okkestry crawl out. They have to stoop or they'd knock their heads off."

The orchestra played. When the house was darkened and the curtain was run up, Bobby had become the more excited of the two.

Such a play as that was! All the characters he knew so well were there. Real houses with trees and fences were lived in and among. Every minute brought a new delight until the boy was tired from his wonderful experience. In the shipwreck scene, he lost himself completely.

"How do they make the real wind and the water?" he asked Shorty.

That absorbed person shook off the grip on his arm, saying:

"It don't make any difference. It's there, all right."

The next minute the great ship was straining

and pitching in front of them and both boys were howling in ecstasy.

Later they had quieted. Mr. Micawber had struck Uriah Heep with the ruler.

"Swat him one for me!" roared Shorty. The audience, thoroughly in sympathy, shouted in laughter. Shorty was abashed at the result of his outbreak.

"It's all right," Bobby insisted. "They don't care if you do holler."

When the show was over the boys stood outside.

"That's the grandest thing I ever saw," was Bobby's comment. "Now we'll go in somewhere and get an ice-cream, and then I'll go to the hotel."

Shorty was not unwilling to indulge in one more luxury. Later they repaired to the "Gloucester."

"Be at the 'Burnside' at eight," warned Bobby, as they separated. "Say, that was a great show, though."

"I'll be there and wait for you. I don't eat there."

"Well, eat there to-morrow morning at my expense," was the command.

"All right, nabob," and with a thoughtful mien the bootblack went away.

In his room, Bobby's mind reveled among the miniature scenes he had witnessed at the theater; then his thoughts came back to his business.

"I guess Joe will say that I have done a good day's work," he concluded.

CHAPTER XX

THE LOST PURSE. A NEGLECTFUL CASHIER.

In the morning he was at the "Burnside" and saw the freight engineer arrive to a breakfast already served.

"Here's Mother," Shorty warned. "She wants a look at you."

It was a strong, cleanly attired woman who came from the kitchen, and said:

"I'm much obliged to you for giving my Raymond such a good time, last night."

"He didn't have half the good time I had," was Bobby's laughing reply.

On the way to the station Bobby said, after a thoughtful silence:

"That's a great scheme the engineers have. I suppose a brakeman could telephone for meals, too?"

"Any one could," was the answer.

Bobby drew a long, satisfied breath. He had solved the important question of quick service in Greenfield railroad depot.

He paid Shorty the fifty cents he had promised him, and which had been driven from his mind by the excitement of the evening before.

"I'll see you again, before long," he said. "You watch out for me."

"I'd like to know who you are," was Shorty's last comment.

A local was coming up the line, and Bobby watched its arrival. The same lack of method was shown in the restaurant as on the day before. If any one wanted anything to eat, he had the privilege of coming for it. Turning to enter the station his foot struck something which was sent spinning away. It was a little purse. Picking it up he opened it and found a ticket to Compton, a fifty-cent, and a ten-cent piece, and a card. The name on the card was Ida Chadwick, Compton.

"It will be easy enough to return this to its owner," Bobby thought, and placing it in his pocket he entered the station.

A girl was buying at the fruit counter, but there was no other customer. The untidy, but pretty cashier was chewing gum. She looked up as Bobby came along, and turning to the waitress, who was wiping dishes near by, said,

her voice and smile brimming with insinuation:

"A lot of people are up here enjoying the mountains, ain't they?"

Bobby knew that he was the subject of the insinuation. He looked over the display of papers.

"Want anything?" the cashier asked, and cast another look at the waitress.

Bobby took a *Herald,* and paid for it.

"You was in yesterday, wasn't you?" the girl remarked, as she gave him his change.

"Yes, I was in here," Bobby admitted.

"Vacationing 'round here?" the girl queried.

"No," Bobby returned. "Just staying for a day or two."

At that instant both were attracted by an exclamation from the girl who had been selecting fruit.

"I've—I've lost my purse!" she said, in dismay. "What shall I do?" and she rushed toward the door and out onto the station platform.

"That's her way to get acquainted," the cashier remarked, her head tossing in disdain. "I'm ashamed of a girl that would do that."

"Do what?" Bobby asked.

"Just so's you didn't know," was the reply. "You know she's tryin' to get acquainted with you. Some girls has got cheek 'nough for anything."

The girl under discussion returned hurriedly to the door, but did not enter again. She appeared very much agitated. Bobby started to go out when the cashier called:

"She's working you. If you speak to her that's all she wants."

"I'll see if she really did lose her purse," Bobby returned. "I'm coming back."

The loser of the purse had gone down to the ticket office, and when Bobby arrived there, she was saying worriedly, to the ticket-master:

"I do not know what I shall do. The ticket was in it, and ten cents for my lunch and fifty cents to pay for my lesson—"

"And a card?" interposed Bobby.

The girl turned tearful eyes on the boy. There was hope in the glance, however.

"I had my card. It had the name, Ida Chadwick, Compton."

"And here is your purse," Bobby said. "You dropped it as you came off of the train. I

should have mailed it to Miss Ida Chadwick, Compton, to-night."

From a disconsolate young lady, she became a thankful, smiling one, immediately.

"I do not know how I should have got home, and I should have had to miss my lesson," she explained.

"Well, miss," the station-master informed her, "I guess you wouldn't have had to stay out doors all night. We'd have sent you home and you could have paid for the ticket some other time. You come up every week."

"I did not know that you had seen me when I came for my lesson."

"Oh, I know your father and he knows me."

"Well," returned the girl, as she started away, "I'm very glad I found the purse, for now I shall not have to borrow a ticket, and I can have my lesson. I thank you very much, and you, also," to Bobby.

"That's a smart girl," the station-master said. "She's a pupil of Odin Ramsdell. She plays at the church entertainments. Her folks are in straitened circumstances and she helps out all she can. She's bookkeeper in the general store down there."

Bobby attempted to get the man's views on the restaurant.

"They don't look to be a very wide-awake crowd in there," he said. "They act as if they were afraid of disturbing somebody."

The man smiled.

"There's going to be a turn-over, I guess," was his comment. "Henderson's pretty sick over the way the place is being run. Used to be a spanking good business here once, but it's played out. Just run into a hole. Poor management. Shorty has been telling me about the show you took him to last night. I guess he wont forget it for a while," laughing.

"I was over here yesterday afternoon and couldn't get back to Thorndike and he agreed to show me the town."

"You could have taken the four-ten up to Brandford and got to Thorndike on the street railroad," the station-master informed him.

"I did not know that," Bobby said, and he made a note for a way out of the difficulty on another occasion.

He went back into the station.

"She found her purse," he told the cashier.

"Oh, she did, did she?" was the unfeeling

retort. "I never know whether they're putting it on, or not. I just despise a cheeky girl. Don't you, Liz?"

She was still chewing gum. Obviously his return was taken by her as a compliment to her attractions, and she employed her utmost blandishment to detain him, saying:

"How'd you like the show last night?"

"I thought it fine," he answered. "Were you there?"

"I seen you, so I must have been there," was her answer. "I should have thought you could have found some one better'n Shorty to take along," and she gave a glance and a giggle in the direction of the waitress, who still wiped dishes.

Bobby blushed at the evident hint, and the girl resumed:

"Don't you want a peach? I'll stand treat."

Another giggle accompanied this remark. The waitress still wiped, but she laughed.

"I guess not," he said, and moved away.

"What are you going off for? Ain't mad, are you?"

"Oh, I want to look around a little," was the answer.

The girl chewed faster, in her disappointment.

"Liz," she called to the waitress, "come here a minute."

"Can't," was the answer, though the girl laughed. "I've got work to do."

"Come over," Bobby joined in; "the dishes can wait."

"Oh, there's more dishes than what you see here," came back the laughing retort. "The eleven-five will be in before I get my work done, if I stop to talk silly to such people as you."

"You won't be killed with work by anything we get out of the 'leven-five. We don't get a dollar off it," the cashier said, with another giggle, but Liz kept to her work.

Bobby took the ten o'clock train down to Hillsboro, and caught the express which was due in Thorndike at noon. All the way he was thinking over his problem.

"I'll give that waitress a chance in the new deal, but the cashier must go," he mused.

He had a talk with Joe that afternoon as soon as the trains had pulled away from Thorndike. He told him the entire trip—of his ex-

perience with Shorty, even to attending the theater.

"It seems to me," he concluded, "that if I got up a scheme whereby I could use the engineer's plan for feeding a train-load, I would have scored a fine point."

Joe had been thinking while he listened. Now he suggested:

"Make a deal with a brakeman to act as your agent on a commission basis. Have a double order blank printed. Your agent can work a train a half-hour before it gets to the present telephone points of the engineers. Suppose he gets an order for a chicken dinner at seventy-five cents. The person wanting the dinner gets half the blank, and is served, on payment at the restaurant, with a chicken dinner. The agent keeps the other half of the blank. The agent telephones his order, and when the train arrives the dinner is ready, immediately, for the person holding the order. The agent can claim his five per cent commission on every paid order that he can match up. If you give an agent the exclusive right to work the train, he'll get through it. It's like so much money found, for him."

"That's immense!" declared Bobby. "You're a partner worth having! The whole thing is done! I'll have Shorty clang a big dinner-bell on the arrival of every train. Well, say," unconsciously using the bootblack's term of emphasis, "you've made this thing easy. I'll keep the peddlers away from the station, and with Shorty's mother in the kitchen it won't take long to turn things our way. I'll start Greenfield up before I tackle the other stands."

"If you don't make Mr. Henderson's eyes open wider before a week has gone by, I'll be surprised," maintained Joe.

"I've got to have better lights down there. It's actually dusky, after six o'clock. I'll take out some of the tables to make the customers get nearer together. It's hard on the waitress to travel around a place three times as big as this is. Besides it would take a crowd, to look as if you had half a dozen, eating. I'll have to get rid of that cashier."

"Why don't you look up the girl that lost her purse?" Joe asked. "The ticket agent said her folks were having hard work to get along. That's a bad way to be, isn't it, Mother?"

The mother, who had been an interested lis-

tener, put her hand into that of her boy, a motion which expressed gratitude at the helpfulness she had received. Bobby saw it.

"The ticket-agent said she helped out all she could. Perhaps she would not be fit for this work."

"Write and ask her," suggested Joe's mother.

"I'll do it to-night," Bobby decided.

When he reached his home the boy again recounted his experiences of the day, not forgetting to give Joe full credit for his suggestion.

"A great piece of work you've done to-day," was Mr. Hawley's comment, "and it all came from your having a shoe-shine. I've noticed all through life that the simplest things often lead to important results—at all events the boy who keeps his eyes and ears open sees and hears the most."

"And that girl that lost her purse," Mrs. Hawley proposed, "why do you not write and ask her if she would like to be cashier? You will have to change."

"Yes," agreed Mr. Hawley, "you could not keep the one that's there now. It is hard to

turn any one away from work, but there are too many who would give their best efforts for you to keep a girl who has shown herself so neglectful of the trust imposed in her."

"Joe's mother wanted me to write Miss Chadwick at once—that a girl who was trying to help her folks would like to hear of something better to do."

"See if she cares to entertain the matter," Mr. Hawley agreed. "If she doesn't, she will tell you."

Bobby wrote a letter, stating that the salary would be eleven dollars a week, and asking her experience in business. Another letter was written, to Shorty's mother.

"It has been a wonderfully good trip," the boy said, as he sealed both envelopes. "It looks as if I would begin to build Greenfield up without nearly so much work as I had thought."

"If you had not met Shorty, you would have been a week in learning what you now know. You're pretty lucky, with all your smartness."

"But, John, you must acknowledge that he is smart, too," Mrs. Hawley said.

"Don't you worry, Mother," Bobby told her.

"The big thing is to get results. If they come because I'm lucky, I won't find any fault."

Mr. Hawley laughed.

"The boy is showing the effects of mingling with the world," he said. "He's not so easily piqued as he was once. He can give or take in an argument. By the way, Joe asked if he had bought into the lily business, when he took half of the restaurant. I told him that I though he had."

"Sure," Bobby agreed. "He helped make that, even if he did compete with me. He can run it next year better than I can, and it is worth running. He'll find a way, and we'll go halves in it."

CHAPTER XXI

THE OPENING OF THE GREENFIELD BUSINESS. MISS CHADWICK PROVES TO BE THE RIGHT KIND OF A CASHIER. SHORTY GETS PROMOTED.

THE two who had been offered positions wrote immediately. Miss Chadwick stated that she had been cashier and bookkeeper at Compton General Store for over a year, and that she had done the banking and anything else required of her. If she received the position she would try to please, and she gave several people of Compton as references. She said that the salary was more than she was receiving at the store, and hoped she would be given the position.

From Shorty's mother came a reply with an assurance that if inquiry was made of any railroad man as to her ability to cook, she would get references enough.

Bobby engaged both at once, by letter.

"I've got to pay Shorty's mother all she got at the 'Burnside,'" he told his mother. "I've

just got to pay her what she asks. I'll risk her asking more than she is worth."

The amazement of Shorty and the amusement of the station-master at Greenfield, when it was known who the new manager was, may be left to conjecture.

"I see that he was some kind of a nabob," was Shorty's way of disposing of the matter.

Mrs. Jones simply wanted what she had been receiving before she had been forced to change to the "Burnside."

Bobby allowed Shorty two dollars a week to handle the bell at train arrivals.

"And I hope to increase business so that your bootblack stand will pay better," he told the boy.

"I'll root for you," declared the delighted fellow. "I know how you do things, and I'll bet you'll win out here. If you do, it'll mean a shove along for me."

The matter of employing the trainmen as agents was taken up with Mr. Henderson, and received that official's sanction. A flyer was furnished which the trainmen were to distribute in season to later work the train for orders. The flyer read:

—NEW MANAGEMENT—

At the railroad restaurant, at Greenfield, first-class food, well cooked, will be served immediately on the arrival of all trains. Orders given to trainmen will be telephoned from the last stopping place, before Greenfield. Full dinners or lunches.

Satisfaction Guaranteed.

Under same management
as
BOBBIE & JOE'S
Thorndike.

Bobby knew of the criticism he was receiving on all sides, but he followed Joe's advice and did not get nervous. His age was the subject of laughs and quips. The former cashier had admirers, even though they had contributed but little to the support of the place, and these predicted the suddenest kind of a smash for the 'Baby Manager.' Harris, the baggage-man, had taken sides against him.

"That new manager's the biggest kind of a bluff," was his remark to Mr. Stevens, the ticket-agent.

"I haven't heard him talking any," was the ticket-seller's retort. "He got the run of things pretty slick."

"You'll see," persisted the baggage-man.

Electric lights were put in. The tables were moved into a space half the former size. Liz, the waitress, gave the new manager a tip that this last move was inciting the contempt of the criticisers.

"They say that you know you can not fill the place," she told him. She appeared really anxious as to the outcome of the new deal.

"I'll try to do better than the place has done for a long time," was Bobby's reply. The boy was able to give and take, in an argument, and he showed no pique.

He was an anxious manager, however, on the day on which his "system" was to begin operation. Miss Chadwick, in the cashier's desk, put a finishing touch, with the flowers she had brought from the country. Shorty's mother had looked over the arrangement of things "upstairs" and had sent an approving nod to the manager.

When the 8.15 A. M. local came into the station, the passengers aroused themselves in response to Shorty's clanging of the bell.

"Five minutes' stop here," shouted the bootblack. "Restaurant under new management. Time for a lunch."

Many passengers who had passed down the road in the last two years entered the restaurant for the first time, the general object being curiosity, but many made purchases.

"I'm getting them off the train," Shorty said to Harris. "You never saw a local give up like that before."

It was from the express due down at 11.10 that Bobby hoped for a test of his "system." He stood near the telephone at 10.20, and looking about saw that his help were all "with him." Mrs. Jones had come to the head of the stairs. The bell tinkled. It was a tense moment. Bobby repeated the order:

"Twenty-six chicken dinners and ten sirloin steaks."

Mrs. Jones disappeared into her kitchen.

"My goodness!" exclaimed Liz, the waitress. "I can't serve all those orders in such a short time."

"If Mr. Hawley will take my desk I will help serve," Miss Chadwick proposed.

"All right; I'll do it," was the manager's reply. "We'll have more help as fast as it is needed, but let's see how the day shows up, first."

When the train drew in and the crowd was being fed the ticket-agent came to Bobby at the cashier's desk.

"I never expected to see this, again," he said. "It's like old times."

What the ticket-agent saw was repeated six times that day as the expresses came in. When Bobby balanced his books he had one hundred and thirty-six dollars.

"Well, say!" exclaimed Shorty, who had stayed to see the finish, "that's more money than this shebang has taken in for a whole week, these last two years."

Bobby was jubilant. There were no faces at the doors to deride him for making a failure, not even Harris's. He called the waitress.

"Can you find two girls who will come in during the busy time?" he asked.

"I'll find them," was her answer. "I know of two who might come."

"I'll give them four dollars a week and put them on as regular as soon as the business needs them all day."

"I'll bring them in to-morrow when I come," Liz told him. "One of them is my sister. She isn't doing anything, now."

The trying day came to an end and the manager was alone. He was pacing the floor when he came on Miss Chadwick, who was sitting in a corner of the room. He stopped, surprised, and then realized the girl's predicament.

"You can't go home until the seven-ten, can you?"

"No. There's no train between five-fifty and seven-ten."

"You can take the five-fifty after this. I guess you'll be in your desk to-morrow;" and he told her of the arrangement he hoped to make for extra waitresses.

"I've been thinking as I sat here that there is quite a sum of money in the cash-drawer. Where I worked in Compton we banked every afternoon, but it looks as if we should bank morning and night, here."

Bobby started. The care of the money had not been thought of.

"I'll see if the station-master will let me use his safe, to-night," he said. "It was lucky for me that you were held over. I should have thought of that money in the night, and it would have spoiled my sleep. I'll get Mr. Stevens's permission."

When he had the permission, he returned and helped her make the money into a package.

"I was also thinking of the bookkeeping plan that would be used here. I am a bookkeeper, and want to be as valuable as I can be to the business. I was paid six dollars in Compton, and the five dollars more that I get here, is very acceptable. I want to earn it."

She was so sedate and so zealous that Bobby began to feel a security in the possession of her. She went on:

"I was thinking that if you pasted the trainmen's blanks and those of the customers together, you could file each day's work as far as expresses go, and if you ever wanted to know which train service was losing, you could refer to a month, or a year back. The express orders could then be carried to the ledger as a total. The day-book should show all food bought and wages paid, and the sundry cash. The ledger could then carry the number of the filing case that held the day's express receipts, the receipts themselves, the sundry cash, and the expense. The books could easily be balanced each day and every part will be simple—but perhaps you have a way of your own."

The girl flushed as she realized the liberty she had taken, but she was reassured, for Bobby answered:

"I have been so anxious about getting the business that I haven't given the bookkeeping a thought. Get the books we need and open them with your way of bookkeeping. I guess I'll have to get you to bank the money, for I shall not be here much of the time."

"I shall be glad to do all that I can."

"Go home on the five-fifty, and I'll have some one to close up. Better bank at two o'clock and I'll get Mr. Stevens to let us use his safe until we can take care of ourselves, and you can keep the late receipts there. I shouldn't wonder if I would have to make you the assistant manager here," laughing.

"Well, that's better than I thought it might be," she returned. "I was wondering this morning if I would be satisfactory to you."

The whistle of her train sounded. Bobby accompanied her out of doors. Returning, he saw Shorty bringing out a broom.

"Mother told me to sweep up," the boy said. "She said you'd probably forgot that had to be done, you had so many other things to think of."

"It slipped me entirely," Bobby acknowledged. "I've got more work for you. I want you to go home and fix up about four o'clock, and come back and take Miss Chadwick's desk so that she can go away on the five-fifty."

"Me for cashier?" he exclaimed, his face showing his delight.

"There won't be much to do, but some one ought to be here to do what is to be done. I'll pay you four dollars instead of two, and you can sweep up when everything is still."

"Get a raise the first day, do I?" was Shorty's comment. "Say, boss, the train orders is the talk of the town."

"Did you ever see the midnight express go through here, Shorty?" rather abruptly.

"Sure! She's a linger. Comes to the water tank at 2.10. I often hear her go by the house. She has nine cars on her and she comes from Chicago without a break in the train. I was down here Fourth of July morning and saw her."

"Anybody hungry on her?"

"Betcher life! Folks gets hungrier traveling in the dark than they do in the daytime.

They only get cat-naps unless they're in the sleepers."

"I've been thinking that as we're here to accommodate the public, we ought to find some way in which that train could be served. You think up some plan to handle it."

"All right, boss." The broom was swung with an added vim, as if in an expression of the importance its manipulator had been given by the new confidence reposed in him.

CHAPTER XXII

BOBBY EXTENDS HIS BUSINESS, AND SHORTY RECEIVES HIS THIRD PROMOTION.

THE new waitresses came in the morning, instead of at noon as Bobby had requested. Liz said that they were willing to learn their parts on their own time, and they would, in this way, be of more value when the rush began.

Bobby made Liz head waitress and paid her another dollar a week.

Shorty was put to a new position of trust. It happened in this way.

"Them two roasts that came this morning are off color," he told the manager.

"'Off color'?" Bobby repeated, very much puzzled.

"You've got to look out or the provision men will unload a lot of cheap stuff on you," was the answer. "There's altogether too much trimmings to this lot. My mother wouldn't stand for such roasts as them in her house. Couldn't afford it. You buy it to eat, not to throw away."

For an instant Bobby looked his amazement, then he followed to the kitchen.

"Raymond says we are not getting good meat," he said to the cook.

Shorty came in lugging a great joint.

"How much waste is there on this?" he asked his mother.

"Well, there's altogether too much," was the answer.

"You look out or they'll skin you," was Shorty's warning.

"You'll have to look out for me," Bobby acknowledged. "I've dealt mostly in other kinds of food. You are chief inspector from this out, and we'll make the pay envelope five dollars."

"All right, boss. These two joints go back, and I'll see that you get two more or they come off the bill. There's such things as poor vegetables and fruit and they won't get by me. I'll keep account of the things I send back, and you can see what you'd lose if I wasn't here."

Mrs. Jones laughed.

"He's smart at such things," she declared. "He's been around kitchens with me ever since he could walk, off and on, and he has picked up a lot that's valuable."

"He won't lose anything if he saves me something," Bobby returned, and he went upstairs with a new opinion of Shorty.

The day began most encouragingly. Passengers on the early locals purchased at the cigar and fruit counter. Shorty declared that the local business was better than the expresses had given, before the change.

"I've had ten shines this morning," he told the manager. "What's that mean? It means there's more people around here. What brings 'em here all of a sudden? I dunno, do you, unless it's the whooping up we're doing?"

Certain it was that more people were about the station than formerly. Mr. Stevens noted it, and explained it with the remark:

"I guess folks like to go where there's something doing."

There was enough "doing" when the expresses began to come in. The manager could view it from the entrance door. He met every one and directed them to seats. The cashier was busy all the time, and he saw how well pleased the customers were by her attentions. At two o'clock he sent her to the bank, and at

three he left for Rochester, on the Central Division.

When he arrived, at half-past six o'clock, he was glad to hear a bell ringing. Thirty people left the train and went into the eating-house. He followed, and introduced himself to the cashier.

"I put the bell-boy on this morning," she told him. "I heard that you were using one at Greenfield, and I have been expecting you. There are some letters for you here, and I imagine they are from brakemen who want to handle your order-blanks on the trains. The man on the 11.40 express came to me and asked if I would get him some of the blanks and he told me that a crowd of the boys were going to write. He hoped to see you when he went up. He said that some of the order-takers had made as high as a dollar and a half, yesterday."

"The news got around pretty quick," Bobby commented.

"The business here is almost nothing," the cashier continued. "The bell to-day has brought more people off this train than have

ever come before. We are all willing enough, here, but we have lacked a head."

"You have a good cook?"

"She's so good that she asked the railroad to reduce her pay so that she would be at liberty to take outside work at the homes of the rich people when something unusual is going on."

"Put her back on her regular pay," Bobby ordered. "It will be my fault if she isn't kept busy."

"We have all been expecting our discharge for a long time," the cashier said. "For, goodness knows, nothing but a railroad could keep this up in the way it was going. So we are looking to you almost as if you were a life-saver."

"If the system works as it has at Greenfield, you're saved, already," Bobby answered.

"I can get this place in working shape in two days," he reflected, as he walked up the platform outside. "Burlington will be ready for me by that time. I'll appoint agents to-morrow."

He met the trainmen the next day, on their trains, and explained the blanks and the commission. The following morning he had the

satisfaction of seeing business commence as it had at Greenfield. At night the place had taken in eighty-two dollars.

"'N' him only a boy," remarked the cook, who had stolen a look at the new manager through the serving-slide. "He's given me a hustle such as I never had before in Rochester depot."

Bobby laughed with the others.

"I hope I'll be able to keep you from showing the rich folks how to get up a dinner," he called back.

"The receipts of to-day are what has been considered a good week's work here," the cashier told him. Bobby replied:

"I'll drop things now, and you keep the system working. Pay the trainmen for their slips as soon as you duplicate them in orders served. For some time those men will be our greatest business-getters, and the quicker they get their money the better they will work."

He was interrupted by a ring at the telephone. The cashier repeated a message for him.

"Greenfield says that there are several letters for you at Thorndike."

"I wouldn't wonder if the trainmen have got

a tip on Burlington station," the new manager said. "If it is so I can begin the work on that line, the other end first."

Bobby went home that night on the trolley road from Brandford. The restaurant at Greenfield was dark when he passed through there, and even Mr. Bradbury had closed his store when he got to Thorndike. He caught a ride from a farmer who was going out past his home, and surprised his father and mother as they were shutting up for the night. The business of retiring was postponed. Instead, Mrs. Hawley got a lunch.

He told what he had done to interested listeners.

"Joe's range has come," his mother informed him. "Mr. Henderson was here to-day and he laughed when he spoke of how you have started up Greenfield."

"Joe's made arrangements with two college boys to handle the pond-lily business next summer," Mr. Hawley said. "They are to gather the lilies and work your business here and at Marshfield. They pay one-half of what they receive for the exclusive right. Joe figures that they will pay about six dollars a day."

"And without any work on our part," Bobby exclaimed. "That Joe is a wonder."

"And Mr. Henderson thinks he can hold the trains here a little longer, if the business should warrant it," Mrs. Hawley broke in.

"Well," exclaimed the boy, "it looks as if things were coming our way pretty fast. I've got the finest cashier at Greenfield you ever heard of. I can leave there any time, and she'll take care of things."

Joe also was of the opinion that matters were progressing well with the firm, when the boys talked things over next morning. He explained to his partner every feature of his improvements and when Bobby started for Burlington his courage was high because of the success which was sure to come to the restaurant in which he was an owner.

CHAPTER XXIII

MR. BRADBURY TELLS JOE HIS MOTHER'S STORY, AND JOE WRITES A LETTER TO DICK.

BUT Joe's mother looked with anxiety on the many things that Joe was doing about the restaurant.

"It is such a lot of money that you are spending," she protested. "You are even getting machinery to beat eggs with."

"And I'm going to put in an electric fan to keep you cool while you are at work."

"You think too much about me. You do, really."

"Oh, I'm not the one that thought that out," was the answer. "Dick wrote that it would be a good idea. What Dick doesn't know isn't worth knowing."

The mother said not a word. She was very thoughtful. It was the quiet time before the noon expresses, and Joe had come in to chat with her, as he always did. Some customers entered and he waited on them, leaving her to

her musings. After a while he came again, and putting his arm affectionately about her, said:

"You don't look like a woman that's getting very rich."

She was still silent, and he continued:

"What's it all about, Mother."

"Are we doing very well?" she asked him, wistfully.

"We're making more than twice as much a week as we were before we bought in," was the answer.

"There's something I ought to tell you, Joe."

"Something about you, or me?"

"It concerns both. You are almost eighteen, and ought to be told. You know your father left us the home, but there is a mortgage that has never been paid and I do not know who holds it. Three years ago I had saved the interest money and you became sick and I had to pay it to the doctor. The man who held the mortgage said that I must pay, or the place would be sold, but I was not forced to leave. Later I learned that some one had bought the mortgage. I have been to the town hall, but there is no record of a change in the holder of the mortgage. If we are doing so well I would

like to pay a little every month and then we would own the house, after a time."

Joe had followed her in astonishment.

"And you have been worrying all alone about this," he said. "I'll find out all about it and we can begin to pay on it. We are going to do much more business at the restaurant when we can give full dinners, as Bobby does. That will be in about two weeks."

"I sometimes think that Mr. Hawley has the mortgage," his mother continued, "and I thought further, that knowing we could not pay on it he was willing to wait until we could."

"I'll know all about it in a little while," Joe declared. "I'll go to Mr. Bradbury and say that I want to do something on the mortgage and that I can't begin until I know who's got it. He'll tell me. How much is it?"

"It's a thousand dollars. We have five hundred in the house, because it is worth seventeen hundred dollars, and the three years' interest and the taxes would allow us the five hundred if it was sold."

"Then we would not have any home—"

"But we could hire one, and we would not be in any one's debt."

"Now that's where you're wrong, Mother." Joe was back to his natural, cheerful way of looking at things. "Dick says that money should be made to earn money. We have five hundred dollars. The interest on one thousand dollars is sixty dollars a year. We couldn't hire any house for that money. I'll find out who holds the mortgage, and we'll begin to cut something off it right away. I'm going to draw fifteen dollars a week from the pond lilies for three months, this year. That's a hundred and eighty dollars. Suppose I put it all into the mortgage and cut off a fifth, almost?"

The hopeful atmosphere soon influenced the mother and she was laughing with the boy, who declared that he never imagined they were so rich.

"I'll have to tell this to Dick in my next letter," he declared.

"No, don't," she urged. "He oughtn't to know all our business."

"I guess he will, though," he insisted. "Dick's the finest man I ever knew. I'd like to have something that he wanted very much. He could have it."

"Could he?" the mother's voice seemed sud-

denly very faint, but Joe was away with his workmen in the new cook-house.

Joe went over to the grocery store after the day's rush was over. Mr. Bradbury came to meet him, a smile on his time-bronzed face.

"Well," was the salutation, "it looks good to see you walking around as if you never had a lame day in your life. Be careful of the foot, though. You know the doctor said you could have a set-back. Don't give you any pain at all now, does it?"

"It feels fine," Joe returned, "but it never feels finer than when it has carried me to the man who started me off to have it fixed up."

"Tut, tut!" came quickly from the old man. "If I did, though, I'm glad of it."

"I came over to ask you about our mortgage." The statement came so abruptly that it made the grocer stare. He clasped his hands behind his back. He was not a handsome man, but to Joe he was one of the wonderful creations. The boy did not see the baggy trousers, the knotted-veined, work-marked hands, the dilapidated straw hat—he only saw the kindly eyes, and he knew the almost childishly tender heart.

"Mother told me about it to-day," he con-

tinued. "She says that we own the house, all but the mortgage and interest, and she don't know who holds that. The interest hasn't been paid for three years, so she thinks that some one who wants to save us trouble has it. I knew you could tell me about it. We can pay up something, now."

"Did you ever think of being insured, Joe?" the grocer asked.

Joe knew that the change of subject was intended, but he answered:

"No, sir."

"Well, I would. You're eighteen, and you can get into a good company, reasonable. You take a twenty-year endowment for two thousand and you'll have the two thousand coming to you when you are thirty-eight. If you die before, your mother gets the money immediately. Everybody ought to think seriously on insurance. It's a duty."

Every word went in. Joe understood, and resolved, right there—but he came for another purpose.

"I'll be insured," he said, "but I want to know about the mortgage. You think I should begin to take care of it, don't you?"

The grocer looked down on him but did not answer.

"When she told me that some one had bought it away from the man who wanted to sell the house to get the mortgage money, I thought it must be Mr. Hawley. Was it?"

The old man shook his head.

"Who was it?" the boy persisted.

"Do you know what a mortgage means, Joe?" The second evasion was so apparent that Joe thought the grocer himself must hold the debt.

"I suppose it's a sort of note like I gave Dick when he let me have the money to buy into the business with."

"Well, a mortgage," went on Mr. Bradbury, "is a lien on the property, and it comes ahead of everything else in a settlement of an estate. It's a good thing if you are able to take care of it. It's a fine thing, then, for you can put the money to use somewhere else and make more out of it than the interest on the mortgage; but if you can't pay, it's an awful bad thing to have around. It can cause a lot of worry before it finally sells the property out to satisfy itself."

During the speech the grocer had swung himself forward and back on his toes and heels, his hands still clasped behind him. Now he stopped as if considering something else. Joe asked him:

"Have you got the mortgage, Mr. Bradbury?"

"No," with another shake of his head, then in a quicker than usual enunciation, "come into the office, boy. I guess I'll tell you a story."

Joe followed, wondering. The grocer motioned him to a seat, and stood where he could see the store through the window.

"I guess you ought to know this, Joe," he began. "You're eighteen, and it won't hurt you to know. I've got to go back a long time —to tell it."

"It's about the mortgage?" Joe interrupted.

"Yes—and about other things. When your mother was your age she was the prettiest, most popular girl in these parts."

"She's pretty now," Joe declared, but very softly.

"She is. And she's good and patient. Well, she was school teacher here, and three men thought a lot of her. One was your father,

the other was John Douglass (you don't know him), and the other—was my Dick."

"Dick?" the boy's eyes were very wide, and his face was flushed. "Is that why he's been so good to me?"

"Dick was just as you know him now, quick to think and act—earnest, with not much fun, or softness in him; but he thought an awful lot of your mother if he didn't have the right way to show it. One night he told her he wanted her to marry him. He did not ask her, he told her. If she had known him as I did she would have known that that was the only way he knew how to ask her, but she didn't like the way he went about it, and she said 'no' to him. That evening your father asked her. He was a free-hearted, nice-looking man, and he did know how to do such things, and she said 'yes.' "

Joe waited. The grocer went on.

"There were never two madder men around here than John Douglass and my Dick when the news got out. Your father told it over at the engine house, and I had a time with Dick that night. He went away from here a week after, but John Douglass stayed around, and tried to make things uncomfortable for your mother.

"Your grandfather built the house you live in and gave it to your father. John Douglass belonged to a well-to-do family and always had money, and he became your father's friend—but he was a bad friend. He got your father to borrow of him, and a year after the marriage, and only a few weeks before you were born, your father gave a mortgage on the house to Douglass. Then your father was killed."

Joe's head had fallen. The old man hesitated, but a minute later continued:

"Your mother showed what she was made of. She tried to get her school back, but the Douglass family stopped that. She turned to sewing, and took private scholars, and she paid the mortgage interest promptly. One day she came in here and asked me if I would carry her interest money to Douglass. She said she was afraid of him. I did the business for her two years; then you got the sick spell and she fell behind.

"That was Douglass's chance. He threatened to foreclose if she did not marry him. Mr. Hawley and I paid the interest once and John Douglass threatened us for what he called interfering. All this time my Dick was making

money out west. I never saw a man make money as he did. He wrote me regular, but he never asked about any one here. He was what is called an embittered man with no other motive than to make money. He built up a great hardware business, became the president of a bank, a director in a railroad, and a big owner of real estate. He did it all in twelve years, then he went to Europe. Seems as though he could not find anything more to get, but he could not stay idle.

"In all this time I never saw him once, but when he was going to Europe he asked me to bring his mother to Boston to see him off. We went down, and he offered to delay his trip and take us both with him, but my wife was afraid of the water and I couldn't leave the business; but we had a lot of satisfaction in being with him those three days. It put ten years on his mother's life. She talks about the things Dick showed her a sight, even now.

"One day, down in Boston, I told him how John Douglass was bothering your mother. He sat like a stone man all through it, then he became nervous, uneasy. He telegraphed half a dozen times that afternoon. He couldn't do

enough for us, but he was stirred up about something, we could see that.

"The day he sailed he gave me a check to buy the mortgage, and a sealed letter which, he said, would make John sell, quick enough. He paid up the interest that John Hawley and I had advanced; then he went away and was gone two years."

Joe was crying. The picture of the lonely man, though with everything save one which could make life beautiful, was very vividly before him. The one thing was his own mother.

"I'd like to see Dick, right now," sobbed the boy.

"I would, too," the grocer said. "What would you do?"

"I would tell him how sorry I am for him, and I would say that we would begin to pay the mortgage."

"Perhaps he don't want it paid," suggested the old man.

"You think that—" quickly.

"Perhaps he likes to hold this chance to protect her, though she never gave him the right. I was glad that he took to you as he did. I know that he thinks a lot of you—"

"He is coming on just as soon as I get the dinner-order service working. He said he would in his last letter."

"Oh, that's why he's coming," and the grocer's laugh drove the atmosphere of sadness from the office. "I thought he was coming, maybe, to see his mother and me."

"Oh, he is, of course, but he will look over the business, too. He has some money in it." Then after a minute's silent thoughtfulness, "Do you think he wants to see my mother, too?"

"Well, Joe, if I knew a man who had wanted a woman so hard for nineteen years that he hasn't seen any other woman who he thought was as good as she is, I'd surely calc'late he'd like to have a look at that one."

Joe told his mother that evening that Mr. Bradbury had the mortgage, but he did not specify as to individuality. He told her that she must not worry as he had made arrangements to take care of everything.

"It's so nice to see you so careful of me," she said. "You won't have to tell Dick about it, now, will you?"

"No," the boy answered, and he felt himself

within the truth, as Dick knew about it already.

That night he wrote to Dick from a heart full of gratitude, and the letter was blotted by his tears. In course of time that letter came to the beautiful home out west, and Dick read it, and knew that the boy knew about the past, though he had kept his promise to his mother. Dick sat a long time with folded arms and his usually stern face softened, as he again read the last paragraph:

"You will come next week, won't you? I'll have everything ready to show you. Don't tell mother what I have said in this. She does not know that I know, and she is afraid that I trouble you by writing so much. I guess she's ashamed about your knowing."

CHAPTER XXIV

BOBBY WORKS FOR A TRADE DISCOUNT AND GETS IT. THE LAWN PARTY. A GIRL AND A VIOLIN.

BOBBY had correctly surmised the subject of the letters which awaited him at Burlington, and his work at that station was quickly over.

He arranged his time so that on Mondays and Thursdays he would be at Rochester, on Tuesdays and Fridays at Burlington, and he had Wednesdays and Saturdays at Greenfield. This plan made it possible for him to run over to Thorndike any afternoon, when Joe might want to consult with him.

All his stations were running profitably and smoothly. His purchases of provisions were quite large and he had decided, that as he was no longer working to revive dying propositions he must find out how a paying business could be improved, and his thoughts had gone toward getting a discount on his purchases. His several requests for a lower rate had received no attention, and at last he had asked

for an appointment with the manager. The unusual time of six-thirty in the evening had been set for the following Wednesday.

At Greenfield, Shorty had achieved much personal distinction. The midnight express was being served entirely through the boy's planning. The telegraph operator was willing to earn an extra dollar a night, by counter-tending. Shorty put in one night in waking up the late express and getting the sleepy passengers into the restaurant, and the plan worked so well that the order went out from Boston, that all trainmen would call "Ten minutes' stop for refreshments" on the 2.10 A. M. Boston Express until further notice.

"You'll be manager of a restaurant some day," Bobby told the boy.

"Who, me?" was Shorty's retort; "you're guffing me. I'll watch you sharp, all the same. I'll get pointers, so if anything of that sort should come floating my way I could clutch hold of it and make a 'rastle to keep on."

From a very uncertain income, Shorty was receiving seven dollars from the road. His services as inspector of provisions were so valuable that they could not be slighted. He did no

shoe-blacking, but hired a boy from whom he realized between two and three dollars a week.

Bobby was talking with him on the afternoon of the appointment with the manager of the provision house.

"They'll kick about some of the things coming back," remarked the inspector, "but I have never sent any big piece back without showing it first to mother."

"Then I have two inspectors," Bobby replied, laughing. "I think the fact that we send stuff back will make them look out and give us the good things the first time."

"Well, I picked up something that was valuable to you when I was chasing my mother 'round the kitchen when I was a kid, didn't I? Say, I give most of my money to my mother. She had a hustle a-carrying me along before I could earn anything. She's a good one, she is. She's told me all along to do everything I could for you and you'd find it out and give me a push, and it's turned out right. I guess what I'd picked up nosing 'round was worth something to you that day you came poking 'round here first?"

"I got it all out of you," Bobby admitted.

"There wasn't any further need of my poking around when you showed me engineers eating at the 'Burnside.' That night at the theater was my first experience, and I enjoyed it, all right."

"The first time you'd been to a show?"

"A show like that, in a regular theater."

"Well, I swanny! And you was a 'Rube,' and here was me a thinking that you'd seen all over."

"I was the greenest chap you ever steered around."

"That shows what eddication does for a fellow. I was stuck on the style you put on, and I knew more about what was doing all the time. I was giving away things without knowin' they was valu'ble. That's 'cause I never went to school long 'nough to know how to get anythin' out of what I do know."

"Well, Shorty," Bobby was trying to give consolation, "I guess I've learned as much by keeping my eyes open as in any other way."

"Do you think I could run a restaurant, seein' I ain't been to school much?"

"You know Abe Lincoln didn't get much schooling. He got to be a pretty big man. He

studied when he was alone, instead of playing pool, though."

Shorty winced over this plain thrust. Pool was his favorite recreation, and he was expert at it.

"I might make money on matches, if I was a good 'nough pool player."

"Yes, you might," Bobby allowed, "but you're sure to make money if you put the time you use pool-practising into study. Why don't you take up night school? Many a man has made something of himself at a night school."

"Couldn't do it. The fellers would guy the life out of me if I did."

"Well, if you are afraid enough of being guyed to prevent being something different than the fellows who guy, when you are five years older, you must be pretty scared of being guyed."

Shorty thought this over.

"They'd put me in with the little fellers, wouldn't they? I don't know much."

"Suppose they did. That oughtn't to frighten you. If you're going to lie down when such a little thing as that comes up, you won't get anywhere. I'll risk that if you go in and

dig, you'll get away from the little fellows, all right."

"Well, say," suddenly throwing aside his indecision, "I'll take a try at it, right off. It'll tickle my mother when she hears of it."

"It'll be hard work and seem pretty slow, at first, but you can win in it."

Another member of his force at Greenfield that claimed Bobby's interest was his cashier. Outside of her methodical work she was a very attractive person. Bobby had to acknowledge that as he watched her sitting at her desk on the day he gave Shorty the advice about attending night school. More than one of her customers endeavored to engage her in conversation, but she simply answered their questions, paying no attention whatever to their insinuations in regard to her personal appearance.

Bobby walked up to the desk during one of the customer's attempts to secure her attention, and heard him say:

"There is a shrewd manager here to get a girl like you to take the money. A fellow would spend fifty cents with you at the desk where he wouldn't spend ten, if that gum-chewer was here."

Her silence made the man desist. When he had gone she looked about to see Bobby watching. Her face was flushed, and her eyes held a tinge of anger.

"I do not know why they say such things," she declared. "I try to attend to my work."

"There are not many such customers, are there?" he asked.

"Goodness, no! One is enough to make me frightfully nervous. When I attend to such a man I begin to think that I wish I could earn my living in some place where I would not be so conspicuous."

"I guess that you would find a fellow like that almost anywhere you worked, but there aren't many of them, you say. If you do not take any more notice of them than you did of this one, they'll get tired of bothering you."

She had stayed over the time required to catch her train and he reminded her of it.

"I'm not going so early to-night," she explained. "I am going to play a little extra, and will be later in going down."

They made up the cash together.

"This is my interesting station in every way," he said. "I suppose it's because I made

the beginning here, and the others just followed along the lines we mapped for this place."

"You are having good success at Rochester and Burlington?" It was the first time she had spoken to him of affairs outside her immediate business.

"Yes. All the places are paying, and their business is increasing nicely. Your form of bookkeeping is used in all the places, and I know at a glance what is being done. The cashiers do the banking in the other places, also, so I am not much more than a figurehead at present. I've got to do something startling pretty soon, or the road will be sorry I was engaged for six months."

"Why, I did not know I was engaged for only six months," she said, her eyes becoming serious.

"I don't think you need to be afraid of your position as long as you want to hold it," he told her. "A manager may go, but while the business is doing as well as this is, a cashier will be needed and no business wants to change cashiers if it is satisfied with the one it has."

"Then—then you almost say this business is satisfied with me."

"Wholly satisfied."

The girl was apparently relieved.

"I do not believe that a business which has been made to pay so well would want to change managers at this time," she retorted, with a laugh. "I am quite avaricious, and would be sorry to lose my position. My teacher says I am doing well on my violin, and I suppose one thing which helps, is the lack of worry in having money enough to pay for the lessons."

"You'll get your supper here when you stop in town," he told her. "You earn it. I don't remember that you've been paid anything for your plan of bookkeeping."

He left her and went up town to keep his appointment with the provision dealer. It was just half-past six when he was shown into the private office.

"Sorry to get you here at such a late hour," the manager told him. "I have been away in the country all day and haven't been back half an hour."

He had swung around his chair, and was looking the boy over. He was a large man and had his opinion of such a young person who had "insisted" on seeing the "principal."

"I am the manager of the railroad restaurant here," Bobby began.

The large man looked him over again, and a smile moved his lips. He lighted a cigar and offered one to his visitor. His entire attitude was patronizing. The interview, in his opinion, was ridiculous.

"I don't smoke," Bobby went on. "I have come to see if I can get a lower price on meat from you."

"You could have asked that of the foreman over the 'phone," was the reply, and the smile had broadened. The big man was so accustomed to dictating that this request had brought the interview to the plane of foolishness. "I don't sell meat."

"Your foreman has been giving me goods at the prices you charge others. There is a difference in my case and I wanted to see you before I changed my dealer. Your foreman doesn't seem to want to listen to me."

The big man brought his brows together in a half scowl.

"You can't get meat in this town at less than you pay. You must be new here, or you would have known that."

"I am new here. I pay cash every day. That ought to be worth a discount."

The manager shook his head, but he was not smiling.

"We've got only one price to everybody," he said, decisively. "You're at liberty to investigate and learn if I am telling things as they are. I remember now, that the railroad has a new man here, and the business is picking up; but even the railroad must conform with the provision conditions that are here."

He arose as if he considered that the interview was at an end. Something in the resolute expression on the boy's face made him proceed, with a less patronizing demeanor.

"You're a smart boy, undoubtedly. The company wouldn't have put so young a fellow in charge if he wasn't smart. I like to see any smart fellow succeed, but we ain't putting our hand in our pocket to push you along. You've got to pay for your provisions just what everybody else pays. We never had a request for a special rate from the restaurant before."

"You didn't because what was sold there wouldn't amount to enough to ask for a rate on. I am buying three hundred dollars worth of

your goods a week and if I can't get any consideration from you I'm going to Boston and put the thing up to the head of your concern."

He had seen the look of surprise on the large face as he quoted figures, and it was intensified as he stated his intention of going to a higher authority. He was at the door when the other called:

"What do you mean by saying you buy three hundred dollars worth a week?"

"I buy for three stations, and you have branches in the places. I pay spot cash the day the goods are delivered. I have an interest in a fourth place. I believe your Boston house wants the business enough to make me a discount for big cash orders. If it doesn't, I'll buy for all the restaurants in some other town."

The big man was in front of the door with his arms folded. He was decidedly more interested than he had been. His manner was less arrogant.

"Why didn't you say you wanted the wholesale rate?" he asked. "Sit down."

He went back to his desk and Bobby took the chair he pointed to.

"I told you what I wanted as soon as I had a chance," he said.

The man was figuring.

"Three hundred a week. That's about sixteen thousand a year."

"Every day's business settled on the spot," Bobby put in. He knew that the situation had turned in his favor. "I'll get the matter before the Boston house, and see if you want the business."

"Of course we want the business. I can tell you that as well as Boston can. What do you expect to get?"

There was an irritability in the tone which could have come from a consciousness that the situation was changed.

"I expect to get wholesale prices. I buy to sell again. No retailer can get along under a fifteen per cent profit; the only difference between any retailer and me is, that I pay spot cash."

Bobby had arisen, now. He showed that he was willing the interview should end. He had not retracted from his position of taking the matter to higher authority. The big man made a condition.

"You'll put the order for the three places through the Greenfield branch, and have us take care of the delivery?"

"Yes."

"I'll give you twelve and a half per cent on everything."

"I'll accept that for a month. If either is dissatisfied at the end of that time, we'll stop the arrangement."

"You want more?"

"I want as much as any other customer that you've got," Bobby returned.

"Twelve and a half per cent off is the best we do."

"If I find another dealer who is getting better than that you'll come down?"

"I'll give you fifteen per cent and we'll have no tail to it," was the final concession, in a growl.

"All right," Bobby agreed. "I'll put in the order for all three places to-morrow, and get around to the Thorndike stand as soon as possible."

He was very much satisfied, as he walked toward his hotel, thinking over the deal. The cut nearly paid for his own salary twice over.

He knew that Joe would be pleased to bring the Thorndike business into the arrangement. The gain there was an unsettled matter until the order-blank system was put to the test, but it would be something.

He ate his dinner and started for a stroll about the city. When passing a church a lighted lawn and a gathering of people attracted his attention, and stopping he saw a banner inviting the public to a lawn party and concert. He went in.

A man whom he had seen at the hotel came to him, and soon he was being introduced to many people. He had never cared for such entertainment at home, but he found himself enjoying this experience, and he readily followed the company indoors when the beginning of the concert was announced. There were programs but he had not secured one, consequently he was not prepared, after hearing a song and a selection on the piano, to see his cashier come forward for the third number with her violin.

A feeling of displeasure crossed over him; then he wondered at it. She was dressed in white, a slip of a girl, with a dainty head prettily poised. She was more than attractive.

A SLIP OF A GIRL, WITH A DAINTY HEAD PRETTILY POISED.
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He looked about and saw that the attention of everybody was taken by her, still she was not ill at ease. He was sure that he could not have stood there, apparently so unconcerned.

When she began to play he had a pride in her. He had never heard any violin-playing beyond what was done at the country gatherings at Thorndike, and he was at first surprised that such tones could be produced. When the playing ceased, a storm of applause followed, but he did not join in it. He was wondering at her composure.

She played again and it seemed that every part of him was throbbing with a new and a strange sensation—a gladness for her, and because he knew her. The house was very still, as if anxious that a note should not be lost, and every eye was on her. Her pretty head lay affectionately on the instrument, and her form moved in time to her music. A thrill rushed through him as he thought that he must know her better than any other person in the large company—a thrill of delight.

When she did not return in response to the second applause, he looked at his watch and reckoned that as it was nine o'clock she was

intending to take the nine-thirty to her home, and he went out to see if he could meet her. He found a rear entrance and waited there. Other men were also waiting, and one was the fellow who had that day tried to engage Miss Chadwick in conversation as she was acting as cashier at the restaurant.

When she appeared a lady walked with her, and he was glad of it, though the others waiting moved away. He went up to her and she appeared surprised, but she introduced him to her companion, her mother.

"I heard you play and thought I would come to see you and tell you how much I liked it," he began.

"I think it really strange that you should have happened in there," she replied after he had told of his accidental visit to the lawn party.

He said that if they would not object he would like to go to the train with them, and they started away together, he carrying the violin which had given such sweet music. He talked so much of her success at the concert that her mother invited him to call at their home in Compton, when he had leisure, and a parlor con-

cert would be given for his especial benefit.

After the train had pulled away he went to the hotel. That night his dreams were not of profits and expenses, but of a slight girl in white, and a sweet-toned violin.

CHAPTER XXV

THE WORKING OF THE "SYSTEM" AT THORNDIKE.

THE expert from the Boston house which had furnished the hotel range for Thorndike restaurant was to make a capacity test on the occasion of the initiation of the "train-order" blanks for that division. His ovens contained ten large fowls, thirty pies and forty loaves of bread. A leg of lamb, a roast of beef, and another of pork were sputtering away. On top of the range twelve kettles of vegetables were boiling. The six receptacles for keeping food warm were empty. Joe's mother viewed it all in dismay.

"What a quantity of food!" she faintly remonstrated.

"Not a perishable thing," Bobby assured her.

"But you do not expect that it will be eaten to-day?" very skeptical.

"That's according to how far your reputation as a cook has gone," Joe told her.

The expert explained the broilers.

"You can have twelve double steaks in twelve minutes. As soon as your order comes in you arrange twenty-four steaks, and twelve minutes before the train is due, you put in the twenty-four. When the train stops, take the first out and put in a second twenty-four. In five minutes after your customers are seated you have served forty-eight steaks. You can't beat that I guess."

Bobby had stopped at home to see the start of the "system" and the elder Hawleys, with Mr. Bradbury, were also spectators. As the great amount of food was inspected, the spirits of the investigators flagged.

"Pretty big apparatus for Thornton," Mr. Bradbury mused, as he shook his head. "You've got to get the business gauged, though."

Even Bobby was skeptical. He went around with his hands in his pockets, but he smiled whenever he saw Joe looking in his direction. He wanted to give his partner all the cheer possible.

Joe's mother was dreadfully anxious. Joe saw it and whispered:

"In an hour from now, think how dubious you are looking without any reason for it."

"But Joe, dear, I know just how hopeful you are, but just think of the quantity of food."

The telephone bell rang. Bobby, unable to curb his anxious excitement, rushed toward it. A minute of intense silence followed. They all looked at the telephone, then Bobby gave a roar:

"Sixty chicken dinners—twelve roast beef—ten roast lamb—twenty-eight steaks."

Joe had taken it down.

"There it is," he called, giving the slip to his astounded mother. "You've got plenty of time. We must seat a hundred and ten people, and there's another train to be heard from. Come, Bobby. Give me a lift here."

Bobby followed him out of doors.

"We'll get Mr. Bradbury's team and lug the chairs and tables from the church vestry," he explained. "Even the table-cloths are there from the supper they had last week."

It became apparent that Joe was going to feed "five hundred" if so many applied, and Mr. Hawley and Mr. Bradbury began to make

trips to the vestry. Once Joe came in, and he had a woman by the arm.

"Here's Mrs. Maloney, Mother," he called. "She'll help you."

It seemed that this was the information for the minute. Mrs. Maloney was an experienced cook, as steady as the pendulum of a clock, and Joe's mother soon caught her atmosphere, and was laughing as heartily as any of them.

The second train-order did not cause such consternation. The run was less than that of the down express. Seventy-two seats were called for by it.

Thorndike station had the appearance of "Cattle Show" week as the passengers swarmed off the trains that day. Five minutes later the great crowd was eating and the scene resembled one of the jolliest dinner parties imaginable. Mr. and Mrs. Hawley, with Bobby and Joe, waited on the tables, and even Mr. Bradbury went over to the store to get a collar and necktie and a black alpaca coat so that he would be presentable while working in the kitchen. Many a traveler received additional enjoyment from his noonday meal as he caught a glance at the busy old man.

When the first rush was over, Bobby got Mr. Henderson on the telephone and told of the situation. In a few minutes the telegraph operator reported orders to hold both expresses twenty minutes instead of twelve; then people began to eat for the taste of the food rather than to fill a void in the quickest time.

Joe's mother was the happiest person in the station. As she received the money, almost every one had something pleasant to say to her. If there were any foolish young men in that company they did not expose their affliction by annoying her. When the trains pulled out, passengers of one waved their hands to those of the other, as if they were old acquaintances. It was like the breaking up of a picnic. Nothing but praise had been spoken of the restaurant.

Joe and Bobby helped Joe's mother count the cash.

"A hundred and fourteen dollars," Joe finally announced to the waiting friends.

The range expert was jubilant.

"Just give me the story of this day, and my house won't ask for any other recommendation," he declared.

"You don't expect to keep this up, Joe?"

Mr. Bradbury suggested. He had been quite stilled by amazement.

"Unless you think this was only a reception to mother, I do," Joe insisted. "Anyway, we'll keep the church tables here for a time, and Mrs. Maloney may bring her two daughters in to-morrow to take full charge in the kitchen. Mother has built the business and she can retire from hard work. She must come down and see if everything is mixed right, then look after the money. I'll have four waitresses in to-morrow and we'll get to work as if this were to be the regular thing."

"He has been so sure of a great success here to-day that, somehow, I haven't had much doubt," Mrs. Hawley remarked.

Of course, now that it had turned out so well, everybody was feeling very fine. In fact, everybody was almost ready to say they were sure it would be a big success, but Mr. Bradbury expressed the final opinion:

"He's done something we didn't know about, that's sure. Neither he nor anybody else had any right to figure on such a rush. What did you do, Joe?"

"Well," laughed happy Joe, "I thought a

little. Dick says it pays better than any other kind of work."

"Anything Dick says will get Joe's full attention," interrupted Mrs. Hawley. "If I had written down all the wise advice I have heard that man give, through Joe, I would never have to think for myself again."

She laughed as she said it, and looked at Joe's mother. Joe went on:

"I thought I had the luck with me because the trains get here just at dinner time, so I went to work to help them get hungry. I had this printed":

Mr. Hawley took the folder the boy held out and read:

Passengers—

There is no dining-car on this train, but at Bobby and Joe's restaurant in Thorndike railroad station there will be served to-day, and every day hereafter, a first-class dinner at noon, when the train arrives.

The best of food and service is guaranteed. We solicit your order for a glass of milk, or a sirloin steak.

Some of our prices.

Full chicken dinner, vegetables and coffee	65 cts.
Roast beef " " " "	55 "
Roast lamb " " " "	55 "
Roast pork " " " "	55 "
Special sirloin steak, French fried potatoes	75 "

Trainmen will solicit your order, giving you an order-blank which can be presented at the restaurant and will secure the dinner you want. The orders will be telephoned in an hour before the arrival of the train and the dinner will be served within two minutes after the arrival.

BOBBY AND JOE'S

"I had the trainmen deliver these through the train at ten o'clock," went on Joe, "then they were to let the folder work a while. If a man reads about roast beef, even if he isn't hungry it's liable to make him hungry. It worked out all right, and the trainmen say that when they went back for orders they were stopped at almost every seat."

"You've improved on the 'system,'" declared Bobby. "I'll use the plan on some of my trains."

Joe turned to the company, and said:

"Mother would invite you to dinner but we haven't anything to eat."

There was a laugh at the expense of the mother, who had only a little while before viewed her well-stocked larder with such apprehension.

They had a dinner, however, even if it did consist of a mixture. Bobby told of the discount he was getting on his provisions.

"If we had bought for Thorndike to-day, at my new rate, we would be fourteen dollars more to the good," he said. "Shall I put in another order of the same kind to-morrow?"

"Sure," Joe answered. "We're going to do this same kind of business every day."

Bobby telephoned the order to Greenfield and its Thorndike branch began delivering in an hour. The expert gave Mrs. Maloney a couple of hours' explanation on the cooking apparatus, and before night everything was in readiness to handle whatever crowd came on the morrow. Mrs. Maloney's daughters found two other girls to wait on the table with them. Everything was in shape to continue business on the new basis when Joe took his mother home.

CHAPTER XXVI

JOE GIVES HIS OPINION ON HOME MATTERS.

THAT evening Joe worked as usual on his accounts, but his mother sewed. Occasionally he looked over at her with pride in his eyes. Finally he said:

"Now are you satisfied to let me manage the business part?"

"I'm afraid I am very foolish, Joe," she answered, "but I do not have the courage I had when you were little. I think it is because you are doing so much. I am more afraid that you will fail, than I was for myself. I have been used to thinking of the necessities—the things I must have. That is why I got behind on the mortgage. If our home was sold, I could not help it, and sometimes I wanted it sold, for that would give me something out of it. Since you have done the planning I haven't understood you, but it has given me a good rest."

"My plans are Dick's plans, you know. That

is why I am so sure of them. Dick could not fail."

She was so still for such a long time, though she did not stop in her sewing, that he stole a glance at her, then watched her openly. She was absorbed in the work, or in her thought. After a while he said:

"I want you to fix your hair as you did for my birthday—the way you used to wear it."

He read the remonstrance in her upward look, and went on:

"And I want you to wear your light dress. You haven't any more cooking to do and you must always look nice."

"You don't think I look nice enough?"

"Not so nice as you can look."

She was quiet another long time. He thought that perhaps his last remark had hurt her, and he told her:

"You know that I think I have the loveliest mother in the world, and I want others to think so, too."

She could not help a laugh, but she said:

"You shouldn't talk so. If you think I am a good mother I am not concerned about what others think. You know that is my best dress."

"I'll get you another best one. We do not have to get along with one best dress any more."

"The business might not keep up."

"It will. I'm working under Dick's plans. It will do well to-morrow and next day and the next, until we begin to neglect it. I'm going to see that you have nice things, hereafter. Nice clothes and anything else you like."

He had come over to her now, and while his eyes, so like hers, were serious, his mouth smiled.

"Will you be ready for the interest on the mortgage?" she asked him. Her eyes were serious, too.

"I am ready for it any time," he assured her.

"I suppose Dick, Mr. Bradbury's son, knows about the mortgage?"

"It's Dick who holds it."

"Why, Joe," turning with a furious flush, "you did not tell me so."

"Yes, I did. I said Mr. Bradbury had it, didn't I?" innocently.

"But you always mean Mr. Bradbury, here, when you say that." There was a touch of irritation in her tone.

"Sorry you did not understand. Dick has it. He bought it when John Douglass was troubling you so."

Her head was raised now, in a most deprecating attitude, but the next moment it had fallen on her hands and her hair was loosened and fell to cover her shoulders. She was shaken by sobs. Joe was on his knees beside her and had his arms about her.

"I do not know where you have learned all this," came in an unsteady voice. "I have been afraid of it. I wish people would not be so interested in my affairs."

"Mr. Bradbury told me," Joe said. "He did not say it to meddle. I had asked him who held the mortgage, and he was not going to tell me—but he did, and he had to explain why he was telling me. He said I was old enough to know, and I'm glad I do know. He said I should be insured, and I am going to be. You were left to fight your way alone once, and you will not be again. He told me how you had been left alone—about the man who influenced my father when everybody else knew what that influence was. Then he had to tell about the other man who shielded you and kept it from

every other person except his father and Mr. Hawley. Those two never meddle with our affairs except when they give their help as they did when they made me like other boys—strong enough to help you. I'm afraid you made an awful mistake, once, Mother, about Dick."

"Why, why, Joe Dayton! What a thing for you to say. You're talking against your—"

"My father," he finished. "Well," slowly, "I have never known any one to love except you, and Dick, and the friends who have been so kind to me, and I do not see why I should talk for any one else in matters where we both are so much concerned. I know that I have not missed a father's care, because he did not have enough to give you what was due you. I know that he taunted Dick before a crowd, because he was luckier, and that does not make him appear very noble to me."

She was crying silently now. He had her close, and all her pretty hair was in his face. He went on:

"Mr. Bradbury thinks as much of you as if you were his own daughter. He said, when he told me about Dick, that I was a smart boy and could take care of you. I was more glad to hear

him say that than I could ever be to hear anything else—except your praise."

"Well, we won't say anything more about it—about long ago, will we, dear?"

She had lifted her face and gazed appealingly at him.

"Not again. I'm glad it is said, though. It oughtn't to have been kept from me until I was more than eighteen years old."

"No," she said, "I ought to have told you—but we won't talk of it any more, will we?"

"I'll not make you feel bad again," he promised.

In the morning she had acceded to both his requests, and he kissed her gayly.

"I do not know why I should do my hair so," she said.

"Just because you knew I wanted you to," he returned. "I guess you look almost as nice now as you can look."

When they arrived at the restaurant, Mrs. Maloney met them in an attitude of defiance. With arms akimbo, she declared:

"Let 'em come, a bileyon of 'em. We're able ter serve 'em." Then observing Joe's mother's appearance, she raised her hands in

ecstatic attention, exclaiming, "Don't she look like a silluf?"

Joe's mother regarded her in unintelligible dismay.

"You mean sylph, don't you, Bridget?" Joe explained. "Where did you ever see one? In Ireland?"

But Bridget had retreated into her kitchen.

The information from the first express that day showed a larger order than on the opening day. Joe nodded his satisfaction to his mother. Bobby telephoned over from Greenfield, and learning the prospects, got Mr. Henderson again. Before the train had arrived, the telegraph operator had instructions to hold the expresses twenty minutes at Greenfield, until further notice. It was the proudest minute the resident manager of Thorndike restaurant had ever known — when he saw that message.

CHAPTER XXVII

DICK BRADBURY'S ILLNESS. JOE GOES WEST.

Two weeks went by. Substantial furniture had taken the place of the fittings brought from the Congregational church vestry, on that day of the initiation of the "system" in the Thorndike station restaurant. Business there was holding to the high-water mark.

Joe's mother was not as contented as conditions would appear to warrant. A disturbing thought had come to her that her boy was growing away from her.

Mrs. Maloney was a wonder of a cook, and the four girls did their work at the tables with clock-like precision, but Joe was away much of the time, before and after expresses, and in the evenings he was still, and occupied with his thoughts. The confidences which had meant so much to her were almost omitted. She often wished that she had told him her own story, instead of having him hear it from another, for she believed that the lack of confidence on

her part was responsible for the change in him.

But it was something entirely out of her reckoning that was worrying Joe. No letter had come from Dick since the "system" had been inaugurated at Thorndike. The boy had written, but no word had come from the west.

One afternoon Joe was in Mr. Bradbury's store, and he said:

"I'm afraid that something's the matter. He was interested enough to tell me what to do, and why doesn't he write now?"

The grocer was not inclined to regard the matter very seriously.

"He may be away," he answered. "He's got a lot of interests in different parts."

The boy was not satisfied. That evening he telegraphed Dick:

"Why don't you come, or write?"

The next morning as they were waiting for the first train order, his mother observing his abstraction, said:

"Joe, are you cross with me?"

The vehemence of his reply surprised her.

"Cross with the sweetest, loveliest mother a boy ever had?"

He stopped his caresses. A telegraph boy had entered. Joe gave a jump from behind the counter and catching the message tore it apart and read it.

"Sign for this, Mother," he shouted, and the next instant was out of doors.

His motions were quieted as he went up Mr. Bradbury's steps. The grocer saw him coming and asked:

"Anything the matter?"

"Dick's sick. I telegraphed and have an answer. It says:

" 'Mr. Bradbury very ill. Come on if possible.

" 'KELLOGG, PHYSICIAN.' "

The grocer was looking down with an indecision on his face that Joe had never seen there before.

"You ought to get ready, quick," the boy exclaimed. "You'll take Mrs. Bradbury along, won't you?"

The answer came slowly:

"I'll have to arrange things here first. His mother ought to go."

"I'll take her out," Joe proposed. "You can come as soon as you can get away. You wait. I'll telegraph again and find out more about it."

He was away and in a few minutes another message was going over the wires:

"Is he very sick? Answer. Some one will come."

When he came into the restaurant his mother asked, worriedly:

"What in the world is the matter, Joe? Why do you keep things to yourself so?"

"Dick's sick. The doctor has sent for Mr. Bradbury."

He saw the irritation leave her face. She was the same cool, thoughtful mother who had directed him before he was able to direct for himself, as she asked:

"Is he very sick?"

"I'll find out soon. I've just sent another message. I've been expecting him for ten days. He said he would come as soon as I got things running with the new range."

Then she colored. She understood the rea-

son why she should wear her hair as she did when a girl, and why she should wear the best dress; but her relief, from the knowledge that there was no division between herself and Joe surmounted everything else. She listened as he told of Mr. Bradbury's unwillingness to decide at once, concluding with:

"When I get this answer I'll know what ought to be done."

The expresses arrived—customers swarmed the place—his mother nodded and smiled when they spoke, and then the place was deserted. The boy looked at her and found a source of discomfort in her composure.

"She doesn't mind it at all," he thought.

As the cash was being made up, she spoke of it.

"Mr. Bradbury is over seventy years old. He is not accustomed to traveling long distances."

"I thought that I would go," the boy said.

"Of course—I want you at home—but perhaps you could be useful to him. He has been kind to you."

"I'll go," giving her a hug. "I know he will want me."

"And you will write me every day?"

"Say, you do care, don't you?" in a rapture of newly awakened delight.

"Hush," she said, "please do not talk so to your mother. I am very thankful to any one who has helped me. What I care for most, and will always care for most, is your love and entire confidence."

The awaited answer came at three o'clock.

"Crisis passed. More favorable. KELLOGG."

Mr. Bradbury had the news as soon as the boy could get over there. He was so relieved that he was able to look at the situation with his usual deliberation.

"You said you would go out with his mother," he said. "It's not so easy for a man of my age to jump into such a thing without a minute's thought about it. If you'll go with his mother I'll come as soon as I can fix things to go. You're a good boy, Joe. You've taken a lot of worry off me to-day."

"It makes me feel good to have you say that," was the reply. "Now about mother. Could she stay at your house while I am away? I don't want to leave her alone."

"What a planner you are! Sure she can stay at the house, and sure she must. We'll be company for each other."

The arrangements were thus completed. In the afternoon two travelers started on the local for Hillsboro, to catch an express for the west.

CHAPTER XXVIII

JOE'S PRIDE AT BEING ABLE TO ASSIST DICK.

JOE was away from Thorndike a month. Such a condition would have seemed impossible but a short time ago, and when the business was not a quarter its present capacity, but Bobby had his affairs in such good shape, and the Maloneys were such good managers, that the principal's absence caused no inconvenience. When, finally he did get home, it was late in the afternoon. Bobby brought him, and they came across from Brandford.

"Dick has been a very sick man," Joe told all his friends. "Typhoid is pretty bad. It would have been mighty hard to have him die, all alone in that splendid big house. He's picking up. The doctor said that bringing his mother out was the best thing that could be done. Just as soon as he is able to travel we're going to get him back here for a good long rest."

Mr. Bradbury sat in his usual attitude of meditation, his elbows on his knees and his hands clasped.

"When I heard about that," he said, "I thought I wouldn't go out west. It's a stiffish journey for an old fellow like me."

"I've got to go back as soon as I can," Joe went on, and his mother excused the pride which was apparent in his tone. "I fixed up the rents on two blocks for him. He wouldn't believe that it had been done so quickly. He said that it usually took three times as long. He's a powerful man out there, when he is well. He owns a lot of property."

"Dick always was a powerful man," Mr. Bradbury observed with a sly glance toward the woman at the cash register, "even if he has sometimes failed in his undertakings. Well, I'll be glad to have him back here again. I'll fix up his old room and he can sit in the bow window and breathe the fragrance of the grass and the roots and the willow trees. Good Lord, I don't see how he has kept away from them so long as he has. It was such smells as those that he was born to, and it will make him a boy again. One time I stayed all night in New York, and I thought I would suffocate. I would rather be the grocer here and get my regular August breath from off our intervale

than live in New York and be a millionaire."

Joe started west again in a week. As he was standing on the steps of the already moving train, he leaned out and gave an order to his mother:

"Get a dressmaker to come right away and make you the prettiest dress you ever had. Will you?"

She said she would, then stood pouting like a girl. She had promised, and Joe knew no difference between a promise when there had not been one second for argument, and another made after due deliberation. She must have the dress, not to disappoint Joe, and she went about it without delay. In her heart she knew she was getting the article of apparel to look "the best she could" when Dick came.

It was on this occasion that Joe saw the inside of the restaurant at Greenfield. The partners had gone away in company.

"We're gaining here, every day," Bobby told him. "There isn't much of a cooking outfit here, but it was big enough to do all the work there was before I came. I've been thinking that if the road makes a new contract with me, I'll get a range like yours."

CHAPTER XXIX

FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES. "WHAT WILL YOU SELL THORNDIKE RESTAURANT FOR?"

WHEN Bobby entered the restaurant after Joe had gone away on the Pacific express, his cashier said:

"Mr. Henderson called up from Hillsboro and wanted to know if you were sure to be here to-day, and I told him you were expected. He said that he wanted to see you and would come up as soon as possible."

A person who had last visited the restaurant when it had been under the management of the railroad, would have been surprised to look in now. The improvements did not end with highly polished hand-rails and tanks, immaculate table linen and an atmosphere of scrupulous cleanliness. There was an aspect of life and prosperity. As soon as one entered there was an immediate welcome from one of the young ladies behind the counter. Courtesy and promptness of attention was acknowledged by all who

called at the restaurant. The conduct of the place had become so near perfection that the daughters of the finest people in Greenfield considered it a very desirable place in which to be employed. There were now no "noon girls." Every one connected with the establishment was on "full pay," and each one was its active advertiser.

An entirely new source of income to the place had sprung from the acquaintances the manager had made. From that night when he had visited the church where Miss Chadwick played the violin, young people of both sexes commenced to call at the restaurant, and the ice-cream and soda trade began to increase. The parents of the young folks could find no objection to such an orderly establishment as a place of rendezvous.

It was not wholly the manager, however, who had brought about this condition of pleasant afternoon meeting at the station. When it had become generally known that the girl who had played the violin at the church lawn party was cashier at the depot restaurant, many girls, musically inclined, had sought her acquaintance, and she had become a general favorite.

To Bobby, his cashier was a source of ever-increasing interest. He had accepted her mother's invitation to call at the home and hear a private concert, and he found the girl charming in her obedience to her parents, and in her ability to put a visitor at his ease. She had attracted his attention by her quickness, her methodical work, and her uniform pleasant address at the station, but at home she won his respect and admiration.

A strong friendship existed between the two. The girl, ever alert to the interest of her employer, had devised a plan of accounting for the three stations beside her own, and this being put in operation, had been the subject of a letter of congratulation from the auditing department of the road. To Bobby came the entire credit, but an increase in the salary of the real instigator of the improvement showed that the manager appreciated her efforts.

Shorty was gone—but in his place Raymond Jones officiated. The old nickname did not remain long after the boy became a regular attendant at the night school.

"Well, say," the boy himself explained it, "the whole outfit of kids guyed me at first, but

I remembered what you said about being scared out of amounting to anything, and I kept right on going. One day Skinny Burton asked me to let him go into the school with me. He was the worst of the guyers. Well, when he went in, he wanted to go again, and he's been going ever since. When the fellows saw Skinny going they followed him like sheep."

Mrs. Jones was very proud of her son's persistence in the search for improvement.

"It's wonderful how much there is to that boy," she said to her co-laborers, "when you think that his father didn't have sense enough to come in when it rained."

That noon when Mr. Henderson came to make his call on Bobby, the manager had dinner ready for him. The superintendent looked about the busy place before he began.

"I did not make a mistake when I picked you for this position. I cannot recall that I ate here at all while we were running it."

"There's no reason why a man should go elsewhere," Bobby insisted. "You can get anything any first-class hotel serves, and at about the same price. I guess I can beat a little on price."

"I suppose the fact has sometimes struck you that the time specified in our agreement is wearing away rapidly."

For an instant Bobby felt a singular check in his usual comfortable line of thought! Can he be here to replace me? was the impression which came first; then he put it aside, and answered:

"I haven't given it a thought. I've been too busy. I suppose that the reason of my carelessness about the place is that our Thorndike restaurant is doing so well that I'm not obliged to have the other stations."

The superintendent was not working on this same line of argument, however, for he said:

"The auditing department has been comparing the work of this nature on my division with that on the southern division, and I think that an effort will be made to engage you away from me. I'll want to make a three-years' contract with you, though I once said I would not do such a thing with any man, again. I'll consider a reasonable increase in your salary, and I will allow you to handle the business in your own way. There, I've come at you frankly—what do you say?"

"I'm glad to know that I've satisfied you,"

Bobby replied, "and I'm glad that I have brought the attention of the company to myself."

"I think that in the long run you will do better to stay by me," interrupted the superintendent. "I have something in my mind for the future that would interest you if you were old enough to take it up."

"I know that I should prefer to stay with you," Bobby answered. "I will consider a three-years' contract."

"At how much advance a week?"

Bobby laughed, as he returned:

"What advance ought I to ask? You ought to know."

"You've settled the point as to ability, and I do not want to haggle about terms. You sent in more money in the last three months than the restaurants netted in any previous twelve months before you were connected with them. We're getting complimentary letters from the traveling public, also—still, you are only a boy."

"A good boy is better than a poor man," Bobby retorted, laughing.

"We have found that out," was the response.

"Suppose I made you an offer of thirty-five dollars a week?"

Bobby was slow in accepting, and the superintendent, taking his own view of the cause of the hesitation, resumed:

"I want you to know that I have done more for you than you are aware of. When I allowed you to start the Thorndike restaurant, I was pretty severely criticised. There has always been a faction in our management who believed that our restaurants should be run under the control of the company. Since you have made such a success at Thorndike, the faction have had a great deal to say about that place being outside the company interests."

"Those men couldn't have been satisfied with this place before I took hold of it," Bobby remarked.

"I've brought that to their attention," Mr. Henderson went on. "I've told them that it is the manager and not the restaurant itself. They do not know anything about the business end of it, but it's the men who do not know, that often map the policy, in a railroad. I mention thirty-five dollars as your salary because a larger sum would be likely to raise

opposition from them. You must remember that you are a boy yet."

"I'm going to accept the proposition at your terms," Bobby announced, "but I am not able to figure that a young fellow who has shown satisfactory results ought not to get as much consideration as an older fellow who had run behind. I appreciate the fact, though, that if you had interfered with me when I wanted to branch out and improve the business, I would not have made the showing I have. You have stood by me and I'll stand by you."

"I came up to-day believing that you would take that view of it. I did not like to think that you would cinch me when it came to making a new contract."

"You of course know that I am getting nothing out of the road at my present pay, and I sha'n't get anything out of it at the raised pay. There was nothing here when I came. I had to make the business to get something out of it for myself. You said that you would shut the places up if I did not make good."

"That's a strong argument on your side," the superintendent acknowledged, "but the fixtures and the stock were here, and there was a

sort of impression that the place was a restaurant, even if it wasn't patronized. Besides, we ran the trains that brought the customers," laughing. "Well, shall I consider it settled that we will make a contract at thirty-five a week for three years from the time the present agreement ends?"

"We'll consider it settled. There is another thing I might bring up, though. I have made a deal which gives me provisions at a price which pays entirely the thirty-five that you will pay me."

"Oh, well," with good-natured deprecation, "that was expected of you. You are paid to stop the leaks. I'm not trying to belittle your work here. It has been fine. I want our contract signed so that you can say to any one who approaches you, that you are tied up for three years more.

"I might have gone about this in a different way if the superintendent of the Southern had started in differently. He did not come to me, but I found his plan out through one of my men. I want to see that division make its restaurants pay, but I would rather it should be done in some way besides at my reputation

and expense. There's another thing I want to broach to-day. What will you sell the road the Thorndike place for?"

Bobby was too much surprised to give an immediate answer of any kind. Mr. Henderson continued:

"This whole business might be settled to the satisfaction of all the interests in the road. If we bought that restaurant the entire equipment would be in the hands of the company; but if you did not stay with us, I would not want the road to buy it. If we bought, and that partner of yours could be induced to handle the Southern division, and you keep this—with you both to look after Thorndike, it would be a perfect deal. That partner of yours is smart. He's younger, isn't he?"

"A year younger. I don't think you would want to pay what he would ask for the place in Thorndike. He has been putting in some expensive fixtures there, and he says that our profits amount to six per cent on eighty thousand dollars."

"We could not pay that amount," the superintendent said with a laugh. "Perhaps you might get him to consider the fact that we will

give him a three-year contract on the Southern Division at thirty-five a week. He would not have any money invested, and as he is another boy, he would be doing fairly well. I should not wonder if the road would pay you five thousand for your interests at Thorndike. Talk it over with him. Now come over to a lawyer and we will fix up the matters between us."

An hour later Bobby returned to the restaurant. Approaching the cashier, he said:

"I do not remember that you have ever told me your age."

She looked up, quickly, and returned:

"I do not remember that I have, either."

"I want you to, for business reasons."

She was plainly puzzled at such a peculiar situation, but replied:

"I shall be eighteen in February."

"I have just signed a contract with Mr. Henderson that will keep you at that desk until you are twenty-one years old."

"Well, isn't that splendid?" in delight. "Now I will begin to take lessons of Mr. Phippen. He is in Hillsboro, and he charges two dollars a lesson. I can go down on the seven-ten and get

there at eight, and catch the nine-thirty, back. I will buy a commutation ticket and my lesson will cost me three dollars and a quarter.''

Bobby thought her very pretty in her excitement.

''Will your mother let you go alone?'' he asked.

''Certainly. I am old enough to earn my living. She goes with me only when the place is where I have never been before.''

''Well, it's at night, and it's quite a distance. I'd go with you if you would let me.''

''I could not think of causing so much trouble. It's very kind in you, but—''

''It will be no trouble at all,'' insisted the manager. ''You tell your mother that I'm going to your lessons with you and she needn't worry.''

CHAPTER XXX

JOE HAS ANOTHER OFFER. JOE'S MOTHER HAS ALSO.

JOE'S mother was not enthusiastic over the proposition Bobby brought home that night. She was proud that the railroad company acknowledged her boy's smartness, but she did not like any idea whatever which would take him away from her.

"We are doing so well that there is no need of Joe's taking on anything more," she declared.

"I think that you had better consider Dick's wishes when you plan on Joe," Mrs. Hawley remarked, with a look at Joe's mother which spoiled any further argument. "Better wait until they get home."

So they waited. Joe's mother received a letter every day.

"Dick is improving," was the clause that most interested Mr. Bradbury, but Bobby had been seized with an ambition to handle all the railroad restaurants, and he listened a little impatiently as Joe's mother read.

"Dick is fit to travel, but there are several things I must fix up before he can get away."

The "fixing up" occupied another week; then, one evening a telegram came saying that the party would be in Thorndike the next day, at noon.

Joe's mother could not go near the train when it got in because she had to look after the crowd of hungry people who rushed into the restaurant. She stood at the door, however, and answered Joe's hand-wave; then a number of men huddled with short steps toward the carriage. Joe went away with Dick.

She was disappointed. She had thought Joe would come for one kiss after being away from her so long, but she smiled at the people who wanted to chat as they paid their dinner bill, and no one among them knew that she was not as happy as she was lovely. When the Hawleys returned and told her how sick Dick looked, how weak he was, and how much he depended on Joe, there might have been pride in her heart, but what she was most conscious of was a feeling that she was very much "out of it" in everything.

When Joe did come in, however, after the

trains had pulled away, he had her in his arms almost before the door had shut and she laughed and cried in happiness.

"What a pretty dress!" the boy exclaimed, holding her away and examining her all over.

"You told me to get it." It was an apology for such an exhibition of vanity.

"I'll have that dressmaker build three more. It makes you look awfully little."

Mrs. Hawley replied for her:

"Yes, it's a pretty dress."

"But doesn't she look great in it?" asked the delighted boy.

"She could not be little and great, too, Joe," Mrs. Hawley answered. "I guess you must mean lovely, but I never think it right to compliment a woman to her face."

Joe laughed heartily at the pout on his mother's lips. He took his favorite attitude with his arm about her, and discovered that the waist was easier to encircle than formerly, at which he laughed and kissed her again.

Bobby came in and there was much handshaking (by Joe's other hand), then Bobby broached the new proposition.

"There has not been any actual offer made,"

he explained, "but if you want to consider one, an offer will come."

Joe hesitated, and Bobby went on, disappointedly:

"I thought you would jump at it."

"Perhaps I may, but I shall have to find out what Dick says about it first," was the reply. "We'll get round to it in a little while."

"Twenty-five hundred is good money for a thing you gave five hundred for," Bobby insinuated, "and we'll both be taken care of."

There was nothing further said about selling for two days. Then it was broached by Joe's mother when they were at home together in the evening. She had not been just satisfied when he had omitted her as one whose influence would be required in the decision. She had thought it all out, however, and now began:

"I haven't said anything about you taking the Southern Division restaurants, dear, but I would not, if I were you."

Joe waited awhile, then returned:

"I'm thinking it over. There's some things that look pretty good about it. If they paid five thousand—"

"But do you think they would, Joe?"

"They will not get it if they don't. If they gave five thousand we could pay Dick back the borrowed money, take up the mortgage and have a thousand left. I would be receiving thirty-five a week and we would save something of that—but there's Dick. He will not give me any advice about it."

"And of course his advice is better than mine."

Joe laughed and gave her a hug.

"I won't do anything that you do not approve of."

"Well, if you take the Southern Division you would have to be away from me a great deal, and I do not approve of that."

"We would not live here if I took it," was the answer. "We would have to be nearer the work."

It was said so quickly that she knew he had been considering the matter very closely indeed. She made no further comment. It seemed to her a prodigious and unhappy thing to think of moving away from Thorndike.

Joe and Mrs. Hawley had many casual meetings about this time. Not very long, but serious conversations ensued between them, in

which the lady propounded certain views with such persistency that the boy was plainly influenced toward her theory (whatever it was) every time he left her. Joe was with Dick a part of every day. Just after the return from out west, the two were in the upstairs room in Mr. Bradbury's house, but in a week they were out riding together. They would not ride very far, however, before some townsman or townswoman stopped them to make inquiry after the invalid's health. As much attention was bestowed on Dick as would have been given to any world-celebrity.

During all this time there was one person who was not very happy, though she smiled when the customers at the restaurant chatted as they paid for their dinners, and every one thought she was just as light-hearted as she was interesting. Joe's mother had to summon all her fortitude to fight her loneliness. She tried all her arts to make Joe take more notice of her, but the boy was so busy that he did not see her efforts. One morning she came down later than usual. Mrs. Hawley had dropped in, and another conversation with Joe had ensued. It was but just concluded when Joe's mother en-

tered, attired in one of the new creations of her dressmaker. In a moment Joe's mother had forgotten her past misery and was in an ecstasy of delight. Joe was lovingly enthusiastic over her.

"You certainly have a good costumer," Mrs. Hawley exclaimed, examining her critically.

"Joe had it made," was her happy explanation. "He walked around me when it was being fitted, telling the dressmaker to 'bring her in here, and let her out there,' just as he did to that Boston man who was putting the range in."

She laughed when Mrs. Hawley laughed, because Joe's notice had made her so contented, but presently the visitor's face grew grave, and coincidently Joe slipped out of doors to look after something or other. No one could have thought the situation premeditated.

"Do you know, Phœbe," Mrs. Hawley said, and there was womanly delicacy displayed, because she did not say it until they were alone, "people are talking a little about you?"

"Oh, my goodness!" the happiness all out of her wonderful eyes. "It's the tight dresses. I oughtn't to have let Joe make me do it, but

he will not look at me unless I do what he asks me to."

Mrs. Hawley had to turn away to conceal her amusement over the exhibition of distress. She resumed quickly, however:

"It isn't that. The dresses are beautiful. It's about your not calling on Dick. You are the only one of his old acquaintances who has kept away from him."

There was an increase of distress on the beautiful face now. "You know that I could not go," in a low voice. "It's different about my going."

"Yes, it is different, but people have a different way of looking at things, you know. You know that there are comparatively few who really knew all about it and it was so long ago that others have forgotten just how it was —besides, people who have come here since have not received just the right idea about it, and I think that some of them believe that he went —well, everybody can not get everything right, of course—"

"I don't understand," said Joe's mother, with a pucker in her brow.

"Well, some people might think that you were

—a little piqued at his going away after he had been so attentive—you know that people will talk—"

"And that I took—"

"Yes. Because everybody knew what a splendid fellow Dick always was—and he has proved himself you know."

Joe's mother was too much amazed to reply immediately. Mrs. Hawley finished it.

"Some people might believe that the reason you do not go to him now is because he went away from you—"

"I never heard of anything so preposterous," exclaimed Joe's mother. "He would never have done such a thing, and I hope you told them so." She subsided, quite unnerved by such an outburst, and said, after working the situation out from the new view-point:

"I think that perhaps I had better go after what has been said."

"I think I would," Mrs. Hawley declared. "If there has been any talk, it will be stopped at once. Everybody will see that you and Dick are good friends."

She said it as she was preparing to leave, and then she did leave. As she passed Joe,

who was coming across the square from the grocery store, she smiled, and inclined her head, but did not make any conversation. A few minutes later, Joe entered the restaurant.

A whole half-hour passed during which the boy stole covert glances at the woman who was never so busy before, at that time of day. He could not recall the time when she had gone so long without speaking to him. Finally he said:

"I want you to go to see Dick with me, this afternoon. Almost everybody in town has called, and it looks a little strange when you think that I went clear out west to see him, and you can not get across the street."

He saw her heightened color as he went on, but she made no comment beyond expressing a willingness to go after her cash was made up.

Then they went out together, leaving Mrs. Maloney and a waitress in charge. As they were ascending the Bradbury steps she took his hand. Mrs. Bradbury received them as cordially as if this were an ordinary visit, and ushered them up to Dick's room.

"I've brought a visitor," Joe said.

Her face was much flushed but she waited

until he had slowly arisen from his big rocker in the bow window. He reached out his hand but did not come forward, so Joe led her to him. He said:

"I am glad to see this visitor."

"We are all very glad that you are improving so fast," she began; then, her eyes lifting, she stopped. He seemed so tall and white and there were such gray streaks in his hair at the sides.

"I am getting on finely, with Joe's help," came back the reply. Joe, seeing how poorly she was bearing the scrutiny, put his arm around her and took her to a chair in the bow window; then with a nervous flutter she put her hand in his, in mute appeal that he stay beside her.

"I wanted to talk over this railroad offer with you both," Joe said. "Mother thinks I should not sell and go to work for the railroad as it will take us away from Thorndike and—"

"I do not like the arrangement, myself," Dick interrupted. He had a very positive way for a man who had been so ill, she thought. It was easy to see that he would have the greater part in the decision about the course Joe would

take, still she was relieved because he had agreed with her views about leaving Thorndike and she raised her eyes to express her thankfulness. She hoped the interview would not last long, not only because she was feeling so ill at ease that she wished she had not come, but also because she was very much provoked over the knowledge that she was showing every bit of discomfort she was feeling.

"I know all about this proposition," Dick was now telling her downcast eyes. "Since Joe has been looking after me and my interests, I have come to depend on him. I am finding out that I can not take care of things as easily as I did once, and I know that I need him more than the road does."

She gave another upward flash of her eyes, just to show that she heard, for she took it for granted that it had all been settled between them before she was brought over; then she looked up at Joe, and commenced to arise to go home, but Dick had something else to say.

"I am very glad you came to-day as I have been thinking it over very seriously. I have talked to my father and mother about it and they agree most heartily. I want to make Joe

my heir, and I want him to have his name changed, by law, to Bradbury."

Her hand dropped out of Joe's. Dick went on:

"This arrangement would be more advantageous to him than anything the railroad could offer. To me it is an absolute necessity—besides, I am very fond of Joe."

As far as she could understand it, she was never to resume her old happy relationship with her boy. It was a cold heart which had to realize that he would go from her. The room was close and she wanted to get out of doors more than ever. The color on her cheeks was gone and the pallor there gave to the long lashes and the brows and the eyes an increased beauty and depth. She knew she must say something, but unconsciously it was an appeal which came from her.

"I think you are very kind to do so much for Joe, and if—if the restaurant might not be sold I could take care of it."

"Without me?" demanded Joe, looking down on her. The genuine amazement in his tone startled her into glancing up. She saw that the invalid was leaning quite out to the end

of his chair arm and was, consequently, very near, indeed; but the next instant Joe was down on his knees beside her, both his arms about her and his lips were pressed to her cheek.

"I'll never leave you alone in the restaurant," the boy said.

"And there is my difficulty," Dick explained.

No other woman was ever in a like position. It had come about in so short a time that she was almost dizzy. A boy was rapturously loving her on one side, and a man's face was close up to the other side—and footsteps sounded on the stairs. She started quickly but she was regularly wedged in, and Dick was talking.

"I would not separate you and Joe for the world. I thought that perhaps you would come with us—and change your name, too, and take care of us both."

It was all clear to her now. Her downcast face with the carnations on each cheek was so expressive that no further verbal message was necessary. Besides, Dick being a business man, and having had one experience, had her hand in his and was slipping on her finger a hoop of gold with a diamond set in it. Her first remark explained her full realization.

"Did—did Mrs. Hawley know—about it?"

"Mrs. Hawley has been indispensable to me," Dick answered. "While Joe has handled this end, she has had the overlooking of the restaurant end."

The smile which met her upward glance showed that he was feeling pretty well for an invalid. The steps were almost at the door. She moved quickly, but without getting very far, for presently she was held in the vice of a sick man's arm, and Joe's face was pressed close to her face by the sick man's other arm—and the steps stopped at the doorway.

"Mother," said the sick man, "Phœbe and Joe will take tea with us, to-night."

"That will be lovely," came in a soft, happy voice, and the footsteps were retraced down through the hall.

CHAPTER XXXI

BOBBY MAKES A PROPOSITION TO THE RAILROAD. RAYMOND GETS A CHANCE.

THAT afternoon visit to Dick Bradbury had important effects on the affairs at "Bobby and Joe's." In the evening Joe announced that he was to take his mother's place as cashier in the morning, and he also gave Bobby his answer on the railroad proposition.

"Dick's running things around here," Bobby told his family, later. "Joe will sell his half of the restaurant, but Dick is going to take him and his mother out west, so nothing can be done about working up the Southern Division."

"I think it's just splendid, the way everything has come out," Mrs. Hawley declared. "I am going to have her and Dick up to dinner as soon as he is able to make a visit."

"I don't know what Mr. Henderson will say," pursued Bobby. "I think that he wanted Joe as much as the restaurant. I thought it

would be a good thing to sell, but I never dreamed that Joe would not be with us."

"Surprises and sudden happenings which look serious are a part of life," Mr. Hawley exclaimed. "You have got to learn that disappointment is dodging around all the time to perplex you. If you get in the habit of living with the idea that your road will never be any rougher than when you are going along easily, you will get some hard jolts before you come to the end of it. I cannot see why Joe's going away should hold you 'up,' permanently. You must try to find a way to meet all of Mr. Henderson's demands without Joe, and show yourself worthy of receiving that other place which he suggests your taking when you are old enough. I'm glad Joe is to be provided for so nicely. I knew that Dick thinks him a necessity to him. He told me that the boy has been settling up matters easily, which have come to be almost an annoyance to himself. There is a great future for Joe, and I'm glad for him—even if I had nothing whatever to do with bringing it about."

Mrs. Hawley flushed, and laughed as she retorted:

"I am glad for him, too, and I did have something to do in bringing it about. I think you might work that Raymond Jones into the Thorndike station, Bobby. He's a smart boy, and ought to be given a chance somewhere."

"Ray would fit in here at Thorndike," Bobby said, after a minute's thought. "Mrs. Maloney and the girls could run the place with any careful cashier. I have been worrying about Ray's mother. Suppose that she should leave me. It would put me in a bad fix, all right. I thought I had things here in good shape and that if Mrs. Maloney should leave me, Joe's mother could keep us going until we found some one else—but now that we are going to lose Joe's mother, I may be put into a tight box in both places."

Mr. Hawley laughed, as he replied:

"I guess there was no need for me to warn you not to lie down on your present security. It's another business axiom that you need to ponder, and that is: Don't jump the brook until you come to it. You will have no trouble with the Maloneys. You are paying into that family twenty-eight dollars a week. That is more than comes into many a family three times

as large. I happen to know something which should ease your mind, somewhat. The Maloneys are negotiating a mortgage through Mr. Bartlett. They are buying a house, so I think that you may safely infer that their present circumstances are satisfactory to them."

"That's good news," declared Bobby, and his voice showed his relief. "There's the same amount going into Ray's family, from the restaurant, and Ray picks up four or five dollars from letting out the bootblack stand. Ray would do well here in Thorndike. He has attended right up to the evening school and his experience at the cashier's desk after Miss Chadwick goes has given him considerable experience."

"I would not worry about your cooks," Mr. Hawley advised. "I should say that you are as well fixed in that direction as if you had anticipated Joe's going, and had prepared for it. That's a pretty good word for any one to keep in mind—that word 'anticipated.' It meant considerable to me one time. When your mother and I were first married we hired a house of Moses Preston. He was what is known as a 'near man.' We lived in the house

a year and expected to stay there until we could buy our own home. One day, about a week before the rent was due, I met Mr. Preston on the street and I paid him. He made out the receipt, and as he handed it to me he said, with a chuckle, 'I guess I will not make any change.'

"'What change were you thinking of making?' I asked him.

"'I've had two dollars a month more than you pay offered for the house,' he said, 'but I guess I won't change. I might get a man in who don't anticipate his payments.'"

"You must not think it operates in that agreeable way every time, Bobby," warned his mother; "I have heard that Andrew Hardstone was very appreciative when John Roberts papered three rooms in the house he was hiring, but Mr. Hardstone raised the rent next month, because, as he said, 'the house was worth more, now that it was fixed up.'"

"There are men and men," Mr. Hawley argued. "You will run across some who will shirk their own obligations but who will insist that obligations to them be fulfilled to the letter. However, if you do the straight thing and be timely in your payments you are putting

yourself in the way of any opportunity for betterment that might be coming along."

These home talks had carried Bobby to his work with a lightened heart many a time, and now, after a good night's sleep, he was better prepared to meet Joe. When the two met in the restaurant the next morning, he began:

"I hate like sixty to have you leave me, Joe, but I guess that it's the better thing for you, and I wish you all the luck possible. We've got along finely together."

"It will be a good many years before I forget the time when there wasn't much in sight for mother and me, and you took us both in," replied serious Joe.

Bobby found Mr. Henderson waiting at Greenfield that day, and he explained Joe's position; also stated that the Thorndike restaurant could be bought for five thousand dollars.

"Well," the superintendent commented, "that will partly arrange matters; that is, all matters that I am personally interested in."

"I can handle the Southern Division, also," Bobby said, "if you make the deal right away and hire Joe to help me as long as he stays around here. You could loan me for such time

as I could get away, and Joe and I would start things up; then when a plan is made that will pull the other places into better shape, I could overlook them and keep them up."

"You've done some planning since we talked this over."

"And I think that the starting of the other places would perhaps give me ideas how to improve my own restaurants. I would like to do this for you, and for myself, and perhaps I could run into that other proposition that you have for me when I grow up, a little quicker."

Mr. Henderson laughed.

"That other thing is a pretty big proposition," he answered, "but I am inclined to think that you will get up to it, sometime. I like the way you go at things. I'll try to put this through at once. Make a typewritten statement of the business you have done, day by day, for the last month. I'll get it before the proper authorities. You think five thousand is the lowest price for Thorndike restaurant?"

"Joe will not sell for a cent less, and if he hadn't that other work before him, he would not sell at all. Dick Bradbury says that although that twenty-five-year right to operate

a store at the depot was probably given as a joke, it is a joke that will hold the road for about twenty-three and a half years longer."

Mr. Henderson threw back his head and laughed.

"I thought that right would be thrown back on us in about two months," he said. "I never for an instant dreamed that we were giving for five dollars a year a perquisite which would so soon pay six per cent on seventy-five thousand dollars. That is the way Joe figures it, isn't it?" still laughing.

"When you see my statement you'll see that he is right," stoutly. "Dick says that we are giving it to you, but he knows that I am after that other proposition, by and by, and he wants Joe out west. Dick is a pretty big man. He owns stock in about everything that I know anything about—"

"Including the C. & A.," interrupted Mr. Henderson.

"Is that so?" Bobby could not conceal his surprise. "I don't think father knows that, even."

"I think he does," Mr. Henderson said. "Dick Bradbury is known by every banking

house in the country that carries first-class securities, and I should not wonder if about all the leading bankers sometimes consult Mr. Bradbury as to what first-class securities are.''

''By sixty, Joe has fallen into a pretty good thing, hasn't he? I don't wonder that he is willing to go out west.''

Dick Bradbury's financial standing still occupied Bobby's thoughts, when, a half hour later, he went to talk with Raymond Jones.

''Well, say,'' began that young man of general work, as they met, ''you and the 'super.' are putting up long confabs these days. He wasn't asking you to take the president's job, was he?''

''No,'' returned the manager, ''he hasn't come to that yet. What we were talking of has you to do with it, a little.''

''Who, me?'' in unfeigned wonder. Then his naturally buoyant temperament overcoming surprise, or all other emotions, ''If he wants me for president, tell him it's all off. I've got enough responsibility in looking after the meat and fish and vegetables.''

The wide grin on the boy's face exposed the fact that two front teeth were missing.

"How did that happen?" Bobby asked. Unconsciously his tone had taken on a tinge of annoyance. He thought it the result of a boyhood fight and he would not want to put a fighting boy in charge at Thorndike.

"Well, say. It's bad enough to get one in the mouth from a blundering ball pitcher, without being blown up by the boss for it. I got that knock a week ago."

"You'll have to have a dentist fix it up right away." Bobby's suggestion came in a quick, decisive voice.

"Well, say," unable to understand the situation. "Do you think I'll hoodoo the business? The way you spit it out, it looks as though you were afraid the Chicago express would make a mistake and think my mouth was a tunnel."

"You know that I once told you that if you tried to make something of yourself you might manage a restaurant some day?"

"And I did it, didn't I?"

"Yes, and I'm here with the restaurant that you can manage."

Ray was too much surprised to grin now. Bobby asked him:

"Do you think that you could hold down the

cashier's desk at Thorndike, and keep things up there?''

''If it's the same thing as this is, and you'd give me a look over now and then, I could.''

The boy was serious enough now. His face was pale from the thought of it. He continued with a shrewd shake of his head:

''I'd give a mighty hard try at it.''

''I think you're going to get the chance to try.''

''Well, say. Let me get this to mother. She may kick about my being away from home nights—''

''But you need not be away from home nights. You can have a pass over the road—''

''Who, me? A pass? Just stick it out for the conductor to see and then slam it back in your pocket again? Well, say. If I get a chance at the Thorndike cashier desk and have a pass I won't change jobs with the president any time.''

He was the rollicking boy again, and nothing but happiness was in his vision—until he was seized with a sudden anxiety.

''Is it a sure thing?'' he asked, and clutched strongly at his employer's coat in his eager-

ness. "Do you think we'll pull it off sure? How's it look to you, honest Injun?"

"The proposition started from the road," Bobby answered. "I've got to get some figures together. If it goes through I thought I would start you at fifteen dollars a week, and you'll be the 'manager' on the spot."

"Fifteen dollars a week and a pass," in suppressed ecstasy. "Wait till I tell mother. Well, say," suddenly toning his voice to a confidential lowness. "We're going to buy a place, mother and me. A real one with a fence around it out in 'Pope's Addition.' Seven rooms and windows all over it. We've got land that'll keep any other house from butting up against us, and if there's any wind a blowing, we own a snack of it. We're going to keep chickens. I told mother you'd buy eggs from us—and the fowls and broilers. You would, wouldn't you?"

"I could use some of your eggs and chickens. Say, Ray, is your mother satisfied with me—with her place, here?"

"Satisfied! Well, say! If the president of the road should get off the train and offer her a bran new locomotive to go to work for him,

she wouldn't budge! She's so satisfied that she tells me twelve times a week to keep my eye on you and you'll make something out of me, and now you're doing it. Well, say, when she hears about this—"

He did not finish, because nothing within his comprehension would express just what she would say.

"I shall not know about this for sure for a week," Bobby said. He was feeling much elated because he knew there was no need of worrying over Mrs. Jones's position in the Greenfield restaurant kitchen. "We must look around and find some one to be meat inspector here."

"Don't you hint that it won't work. It makes me nervous to hear it. Of course it'll work. Now there's Billygoat. He could do my work here."

"Billygoat?" repeated Bobby. "Is that a real name?"

"Billy Grout. Well, say! Bill Grout knows this business from top to bottom. He's so stuck on inspectin' provisions that I have to push him clear to the end of the platform to start him after the up-town shines. He's

straighter than a flagpole, Billygoat is. He told me and mother that if we run up against any hard bumps with the house when we bought it, he'd chip in. He hasn't any mother, and the both of us haven't any father. He says fathers are no good anyhow, and I guess he's right—"

"We'll look him over together," Bobby interrupted. "If he's fit we will try him."

"I'll have two lights put up in the tunnel right away," Raymond announced, motioning toward his mouth. "You'll see me get the whole equipment into shape if the new job comes to me. Well, say! The manager of a restaurant with a pass! I'm mighty glad now that you got me to polish myself up against a school teacher."

CHAPTER XXXII

MR. BRADBURY AND MRS. HAWLEY PLAY PARTNERS IN THE GAME OF PROMOTION.

JOE'S mother was very happy during this time. Every day she was out driving with Dick, and many of the rides had the Hawley farm as a point of call.

"I declare, I'm pleased enough that I hurried them up," Mrs. Hawley told her husband one afternoon. "To see Dick reach for her hand and put it on his arm is almost pathetic. He does it so suddenly at times—when he is talking or when he is thinking. It was the prettiest thing imaginable to hear Phœbe tell why she is wearing a jaunty cap instead of a hat. She says that Dick calls a big hat ridiculous when driving, but I say that Phœbe was never prettier than in that cap, and Dick knows it."

"Dick seems very contented," Mr. Hawley returned. "He shows up pretty big when you know him thoroughly. When they thought he was going to die out west there he destroyed

all the notes he held against Joe, and the mortgage on the house—"

"So Phœbe would not be bothered," Mrs. Hawley said, fully comprehending. "Isn't he just splendid?"

"They are talking of tearing down the cottage and building a fine summer home on the site. That would bring them here every year. Henry is pleased enough about it, but it's quite a distance from Henry's house to Phœbe's. I've been thinking—"

Mrs. Hawley looked at her husband. It did not seem possible that the thought which suddenly came to her was the very one her husband had stopped over—but she was waiting most interestedly.

"I've been thinking," resumed her husband, "that we are not much farther away from Henry than Phœbe is, and—well, Thorndike isn't much cooler than other places on a sultry day. If Dick would care to buy, I would sell him our south knoll. Do you think that you and Phœbe would continue on good terms if you lived as near as that? If Henry Bradbury's son wants some of our air, he's the only man I know of who can buy it."

That was the thought which had come to Mrs. Hawley. She was delighted.

"Would you let me broach it to them?" she asked.

"Yes. I guess you are the one to do it. We do not want to force anything on to them, but if they want the knoll they can have it. It will not cut into the farm any, and they will have their separate right of way to the road. It's as cool there as here."

It may be supposed that many hours did not pass before Mrs. Hawley had occasion to go down town. She found all of the Bradburys assembled on the grocery store steps, and immediately stated her errand, concluding with:

"You could sell Phœbe's place."

"I think you're lucky to have the opportunity to buy," Mr. Bradbury said. "Hartwell will give you a bonus to-morrow. Phœbe knows what the air on that hill is in summer."

"Yes," Joe's mother said, softly, "I shall never forget that air coming into my room the afternoon they took me there, when I was sick."

"We will buy the knoll, and thank you for the opportunity," Dick said. He had put Joe's mother's hand on his arm. "I'll have Joe get

a Boston architect to look over the site and submit a plan for a house worthy of the location—"

"We'll have a 'Nob Hill' in town," interrupted Mr. Bradbury. "I'll wager that Hartwell gets a location up there."

"No," Mrs. Hawley insisted, "John said that only one man could buy his air and that man was Henry Bradbury's son."

For a minute Mr. Bradbury could make no retort. Joe's mother watched the working of the old face, a smile of sympathy on her own—then said:

"I think it very beautiful that those two good men have always been able to live near each other."

"I'm not ashamed to have people know that I value John Hawley's good opinion," Mr. Bradbury remarked, "but I didn't know that he would give up a part of his well-guarded acres even to one of my kin. I am very proud of his confidence."

"And I know that he is proud of the good things you say about him," interposed Joe's mother, "and he should be."

"I don't need any championing, or apologiz-

ing for, or any kind of care-taking by you in any way, Phœbe," Mr. Bradbury said, "but one of my kin does. I've heard about the house you are going to have in the west, and the summer home you're contemplating here; but Dick don't seem to be able to tell just when you're going to be married. Dick's mother is getting anxious. She asked me yesterday when we were going to send the cards out, and I couldn't say anything. I thought that you and Dick had come to some understanding—"

"After twenty-two years," interrupted the Bradbury son, at which there was general laughter. Mr. Bradbury persisted:

"How long ought it take her to get ready, Mrs. Hawley?"

"I think it could be done in two weeks," was the answer.

"Mercy!" from Joe's mother. "It could not be."

"Think that's ample time?" Mr. Bradbury queried.

"Ample. I'll help her. People are talking about her being out so much with Dick on such a short acquaintance."

That made even Joe's mother laugh.

"You get the cards out for two weeks, Father," Dick ordered, just as if he was talking to the architect who would build the house on the Hawley farm; but there was a difference, for he took her hand and held it fast, and she, probably on account of his recent long illness, placed her other hand there, in a protecting and a confiding manner.

"So it's settled," said Mrs. Hawley. "Well, I'm glad enough. I've had an awful amount of worry over it. I'll take the responsibility of having her ready in two weeks."

And Mrs. Hawley, being a notable example of trustworthiness, did actually deliver to the society of Thorndike on the appointed day, a most bloomingly beautiful and happy person who was to be known henceforth as Mrs. Dick Bradbury.

CHAPTER XXXIII

PLANNING THE WORK ON THE "SOUTHERN DIVISION."

THE wedding took place the latter part of August. The decision of the railroad regarding the purchasing of the Thorndike restaurant was hurried when it was known that the "Dick Bradburys" would go west the first of October.

Joe's mother could not conceal the pride over the first provision of the transfer as made by the railroad company.

"Why," she said, "they will not buy the restaurant if Joe does not agree to help Bobby start up the Southern Division places."

Raymond Jones was made the "Resident Manager" at Thorndike station restaurant.

"It's up to me to make good now," was the way the former provision inspector summed up his new circumstances. "If I keep my eyes peeled I may get to be president of the road."

It would be difficult for one to recognize in the carefully dressed, quietly active fellow who went to Thorndike every day the harum-scarum

boy who was afraid to go to night school on account of the anticipated jeers of his young mates.

"That Shorty is a wonder," commented Ed. Skinner, the engineer of the early morning "up" freight one morning as Raymond passed him on the Greenfield station platform. "I declare, I find myself wondering if I had better holler out to him, he's roaming around in such togs."

Bobby took Joe on a flying inspection of the restaurants already under his control.

"You've certainly got a fine organization," was the latter's comment. "Everything is working splendidly. Once a week is all the time you need give with such help looking after things. I would not wonder if you were able to take complete charge of all the road's places and hold them all the time."

But another and a less comfortable impression was held by both boys before another week passed. They had visited the three restaurants on the Southern Division and were back in Thorndike without having reached any definite opinion regarding the work before them. This afternoon they had met in the restaurant,

and Joe had just come from a long talk with Dick Bradbury. He began:

"We cannot use any of the tactics that have helped us out up here, that's sure. Every train carries a dining-car, and no train stops more than five minutes. Dick says that it is a case of competition we must arrange to handle. We haven't had anything of the kind before. What we have been doing is to feed people who came to be fed—now we must get the people to come to be fed."

"There are twenty-five thousand people going through each of the three stations on the Southern Division every day," Bobby argued.

"But they all get their meals somewhere at present," returned Joe. "What we have got to do is to take them away from where they go now, and get them to come to us."

"Suppose that we put an advertisement in the papers," was Bobby's suggestion. "We would catch some of them."

"We would have to advertise something extraordinary. Almost everybody knows that the restaurants are there now."

"How about advertising better food—or lower prices for the food?"

"Well," Joe replied, "Dick doesn't seem to think that would draw very well. He says that we cannot expect to get much business from the people who live in the different places where the restaurants are, because those people go home to eat. He says that people who stop at hotels are in the same list, as far as we are concerned. He thinks that we have got to go after what is called the 'floating population'—and he means the men and women who come in to the towns and do business in the stores or about the streets, and then go away. The cheaper and better food would only interest them, Dick thinks, but if we have something that would be in front of them every time they turned around while they were in the city, they would get to thinking of what we had and would be influenced to go to us. He says that is the science of advertising, and that an advertisement in the papers which may or may not be seen by a person once, would not have much effect. I have been thinking since I left him that if we could get a sign put on the front and back end of all the street-cars in the cities we would be getting as near to Dick's idea as anything would."

"It would be immense," Bobby declared, jumping to his feet in sudden enthusiasm.

"It would be in front of everybody, and we would be the only thing advertised," mused Joe, "but I do not believe we could get the right to do it."

"We can try it," Bobby exclaimed. "You wait till I work out a thought that has come to me."

He was away to the telephone booth, and when he returned his face showed satisfaction.

"Mr. Henderson seems to think that it might be possible to get the right from the street-car companies. He says he will have the president of the C. & A. write a letter of introduction to the different managers of the car lines."

"If we get two electric signs, that will be big displays in the daytime, too, and put one each side of the track about a mile from the depots, that would get the incoming passengers thinking about dinner," Joe went on.

"That's good, too," Bobby assented.

The second day after, the boys, armed with the letters of introduction, went to the manager of the street road in Springfield. Joe had suggested this place for a trial of the plan.

"If we get a chance to use the cars there," he argued, "it will influence the managers of the other lines, as it is the largest place of them all."

The Springfield manager demurred.

"I don't know about this," he began. "We would like to accommodate your road, but we have never allowed anything but signs advertising our own features on our dashboards. I'll let you know this afternoon."

It was Mr. Henderson who informed the boys of the success of their application. The Springfield manager had telephoned the head offices of the C. & A. and the deal was put through without delay.

In four days the Springfield restaurant had undergone a transformation. Beautiful palms were set about the place and a uniformed attendant stood at the gate to announce the change of management at the "Palm Restaurant." Along the streets of Springfield the street-cars, coming and going, bore the information, attractively displayed, that the Palm Restaurant was prepared to give anything from a lunch to a full course dinner at moderate prices and with quick service; while at the loca-

tions beside the railroad track two great signs, red and black in the daytime and glaringly electrified in the evening, read:

THE PALM RESTAURANT.

SPRINGFIELD.

Depot Restaurant. Gong strikes Two Minutes Before Trains.
Best of Everything Served Quickly.
Lunch or Full Dinner. Reasonable Rates.

The boys awaited results, feeling that everything possible had been done. They were not to be disappointed. The spurt of business which immediately started held good and increased. The service was praised, and when it became known that the place was under the same management as "Bobby and Joe's" it received considerable free advertising from travelers on the other division.

In a week Bobby reported to Mr. Henderson that one of the Southern Division stands had been brought into a paying condition.

"Yes, I know," that official replied; "I am getting some of the credit because I loaned you. There's a little matter that has come up lately that you'll have to hear pretty soon, so I might as well give it to you now. Some of

the management want Shorty Jones removed from Thorndike."

Bobby studied the superintendent's face in amazement. At last he demanded:

"What for?"

"It is thought that it is better not to have a man in such a responsible position whose mother is only a cook. Besides, it is thought that you could get a more prepossessing-looking cashier and manager."

For another minute Bobby studied the matter. Then he broke out:

"I have brought this business up to its present standing without any assistance from the management. I don't want to appear to oppose you in any plan you may have personally, but I won't have any other man in the company dictate as to whom I shall hire. I have taught Raymond Jones and I feel secure with him at Thorndike. You have allowed me to make a paying proposition here, but even before I get started on this new division the road wants to dictate. I won't stand it."

Mr. Henderson did not show emotion of any kind. He said:

"I imagine that there is some one else whom

the management would like to give the place to."

"The management had a man here at Greenfield once." Bobby's reply had the tartness of a retort. "I will not be responsible for the work of any man I do not know. If the road wants Raymond's place they can also have mine."

"And that is your answer to the road?"

"It is the only answer I have. I know I am right in this. You once said that a road was often run by men who knew the least about the business, and I will not let such a crowd get a hold on me."

Mr. Henderson did not refer to the subject again that day. Bobby took him to Miss Chadwick's desk and showed him the balance sheets for the last week. He showed no sign of being offended, and talked interestingly of the work on the Southern Division. When the five-ten local came through he went away on her.

Bobby did not mention his argument with Mr. Henderson at home. Even Joe went to work on the other Southern Division restaurants without any knowledge of the thoughts which sometimes bothered his partner. Work-

ing on the same plan which they had adopted at Springfield, their method was so successful that Joe notified the railroad of his resignation from its employ at the end of three weeks, and turned his attention to the building of the summer home on the Hawley farm. Bobby kept pretty closely to the Southern Division for two weeks longer, and the two met on evenings to go over the events of the day; then Mr. Henderson was advised that all the Southern Division points were paying good profits and that Bobby wished to be relieved of further responsibility regarding them. The letter brought Mr. Henderson to Greenfield the next morning.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Can't you keep an eye on the whole business?"

"I have thought it over pretty carefully," was Bobby's answer. "I have shown what can be done, but I don't care to do any more for a management that would interfere as you have suggested might be done. I am satisfied with my old stands."

"But it is suggested that you have the handling of everything in your own way now," the superintendent announced. "I reported your

answer regarding Jones, and the majority backed you up. That's why you have never heard anything further along the line. I want you to look out for it all. Will that have any effect on you?"

"It surely will," Bobby returned. "I should be a pretty ungrateful fellow if I was not willing but glad to do anything you asked of me. I'll handle the whole business, and you can arrange for the extra money that my services will be worth," with a laugh.

Bobby told Joe all about the attempted interference of the company officials and its result that night.

"Well," said his partner, "you have landed as I expected you would, on top of everything."

"I should not be on top long, if I allowed everybody to tell me what to do and how to do it."

"I should not wonder if you were being tested, when the talk of interference was happening," Joe told him. "It does not seem sensible that one of the officials would want another trial of the road's experience at Greenfield before you took hold."

"How do you mean—my being tested?"

"Mr. Henderson has said that there was something larger that he had for you sometime, and I have been thinking he was just trying you to see if you were big enough to stand up for what you thought was right."

It was an entirely new idea for Bobby to ponder over and it kept him busy for some minutes. Finally he said:

"I've spent a lot of time wondering what the bigger place that he has referred to three times could be, but I am still wondering. I'm curious about it all right."

"I guess you're on the right road to catch up with it sometime," Joe prophesied.

In all this time Joe was having the most fascinating of all his life's experiences. He was going over plans with a city architect and to see his mother's delight when something new for her convenience was inserted into the specifications was an equal delight for himself. The house on the Hawley farm was to be the finest in that part of the country. When the plans were finally to every one's satisfaction, the architect was to superintend the building, and receive a percentage on the cost for doing so. This arrangement was necessary, because Dick

said that Joe must go west with him and could not superintend the building.

A week before the migration of the "Dick Bradburys," Bobby and Joe had their last consultation. They were in the Thorndike restaurant. Bobby had discontinued the signs on street-cars nearly a month before. He had not noticed any decrease in business and he wanted Joe's idea of continuing advertising.

"I expected that there would be some dropping off in customers," he now said.

"It was a great piece of work," Joe returned, "to hold people's attention so well. Dick says that a business should advertise to at least ten per cent of its profits always. Otherwise it will fall back. He says that even if a man has no competition he should advertise. You know 'Bobby and Joe's Mince Pies' stirred things up, and we had no competition," with a laugh.

"Must have made people hungry to talk about them," was Bobby's reply. "It certainly sold pies."

"I was thinking of a scheme you might use," Joe went on. "Issue check tickets at one, two, and five dollars each. If a customer brings in fifteen dollars worth of punched tickets, give

him one of the dollar tickets. That would be about ten per cent for advertising; that is, ten per cent of the profit. Any person would like to get a dollar meal-ticket free. You would be giving your customer an inducement that would bring him back again."

"Well," said Bobby, "I guess Dick's right. When you consider that the week before we took hold at Springfield the restaurant made a profit of nine dollars, and that last week the profit was eighty dollars, we'll have to say that advertising pays. I'll start a regular advertising account and pay it ten dollars a week."

The "rebate" plan started in well. With several hundred travelers from all sections of the State carrying "Palm Restaurant" tickets and explaining to their friends that there was a certain value to "Palm Restaurant" tickets, even after all the meals were punched out, it is not to be wondered at that the tickets soon became popular.

Affairs with both Bobby and Joe were most satisfactory. Mr. Henderson had not mentioned the removal of Raymond Jones since that first time when he had met decided opposition. The Southern Division restaurants

were "gilt-edged" properties to the railroad company, and any proposition that suggested interference with their manager would now be frowned upon by the most persistent meddler in railroad management. Miss Chadwick had mastered a typewriter, and her reports, now embracing all divisions, were a source of admiration to the auditing department of the road.

With Joe everything was in readiness for departure. He had never known that he had so many friends to give well wishes. Dick Bradbury was very proud of the good feeling from all sides toward his wife, and Phœbe was so gentle and so prettily pleased at the show of affection that she declared that:

"No one but Dick Bradbury could ever have taken me away from Thorndike."

The last thing the Bradburys saw in riding away from Thorndike was the restaurant, which, according with the terms of sale, was to be forever known by its sign as,

BOBBY AND JOE'S.

CHAPTER XXXIV

MR. HENDERSON'S BIG PROPOSITION IS UNFOLDED.

THREE years went by—years of prosperity for all the restaurants on the C. & A. system. Robert Hawley was held in such high esteem that a social visit from him to the executive of the company was a welcome and not infrequent occurrence. A young man who, at twenty-three years of age, has secured the confidence of his superiors in business, is always welcomed at headquarters.

His experience with the world had given Robert the carriage and deportment of a man of affairs. He was not afraid of meeting any man in any station in life. He knew that while he conducted himself respectfully, he was as good as any other man. Another might have the advantage of wealth, but he knew that wealth was but a temporary advantage. Opportunity was at his own hand for the betterment of his financial condition.

Long ago Mrs. Hawley had called on Miss

Chadwick at the latter's home and had become fascinated with the young lady.

"I am simply delighted with her," she reported at home, "and I think that Robert has shown a lot of sense in choosing her to help him through life."

Mr. Hawley was inclined to laugh at what he termed the "infatuation of the Hawley family," but when Robert brought the girl home, and the father heard her play on the violin, and studied her sweet, modest ways, so like those of his wife, there was observed an immediate addition in the ranks of the "infatuated" ones.

Some months later, when Mrs. Hawley was ill, the girl assisted at the Hawley farm for a week, while the manager of the C. & A. Co. restaurants took the cashier's desk at Greenfield. At the finish of that illness it was Mr. Hawley who suggested that the young people come to some definite understanding as regards future relationship.

"If you don't marry her in a reasonable time, some one else will get her, and she's too good to lose," was the father's terse arrangement of the case.

The same had been Robert's opinion for a long time, and seeing no possible objector except the girl herself, he arranged matters quickly and satisfactorily. It was then divulged what an excellent cashier had been in possession at Greenfield. Miss Chadwick had instructed her younger sister into all the mysteries of the counting department as a safeguard against sickness on her own part, and now the change of cashiers was made with so little disturbance that the auditing department never knew about it. The reports continued to come in with undiminished accuracy. The first to know was Mr. Henderson.

"Cashier sick?" he asked one morning.

"No," was the answer. "She's gone."

The superintendent's face showed surprise.

"I thought she was indispensable," he continued.

"Well," Robert explained, "my father and mother wanted her, and this girl is her sister and has been brought up as her understudy—in case of sickness."

"Your folks sick?" Mr. Henderson was puzzled over it.

"No," laughing, "I suppose I'm the sickest

one, though the family want her, too. I'm going to take her home for good and all."

Mr. Henderson was profuse in his congratulations.

"I never saw a girl who attended to business as she has," he declared. "She's methodical, and quiet, and trustworthy. That's a combination in any person that will carry up the longest hill. You're a lucky fellow. They say she is a fine violinist. As for personal attractions, she possesses all that the law ought to allow any girl."

"That's the general impression up at the house," was the happy, laughing retort.

All the morning the superintendent appeared thoughtful. At noon he suggested:

"I've got something to tell you while we have dinner."

When they sat at table Bobby observed:

"The last time we had an important conference, you asked me to change cashiers at Thorndike."

Mr. Henderson threw back his head and laughed.

"When I put your answer before the board, there was a collapse on interference. A large

majority were with you and at last the principal 'mixer' conceded that you must be a colt of fiery mettle and he hoped you would not get tangled in the traces. He withdrew his suggestion of the change. The fact is, I was pleased that you spoke up. I have been sort of grooming you for another position, as I have before hinted."

"The position that needed years on my head before the chance to consider would come?"

"Yes. If you think of marrying you had better know about it. Going to set up a home?"

"No. Father and Mother won't let me. We have got to live with them."

"Well, that's all right. We'll get down to business at once. It relates to the three hotels out in Thorndike."

Bobby was so surprised that he could say nothing. He could only look. What he could possibly have to do with the three hotels puzzled him greatly. Mr. Henderson went on:

"Our hotels have been losing money, or just holding their own for a long time. The Thorwald has been making a little money, and could have done well, but it has been run without regard to profits. Two years ago Mr. Hartwell

said you could take hold of our hotels and build the business up, but I did not believe it right to risk your making a failure. I thought you needed a few more years on you."

The subject matter of the superintendent's plan for the future was clear to the young manager and he was amazed. He had conquered unusual situations, but this project looked stupendous to him.

"There's a new aspect to the hotel proposition now," continued Mr. Henderson. "The largest stockholder in the Thorwald has been elected a director in the railroad. The long and short of it is that we can get the remainder of the Thorwald stock, and put you in charge of the three places at a salary of, at first, four thousand dollars a year. There would be a big saving there, for the management of the three places is now costing twelve thousand. The provision account of the restaurants under your control shows that a great deal of money is wasted in the provisioning of the hotels. Now are you old enough to handle the thing?"

There was no immediate answer. Bobby was doing the quickest thinking that had been ever called for from his unusually active brain. He

was conscious of an exultation that was rapidly surmounting the timidity which the magnitude of the proposition had at first evoked. When he did speak, the superintendent was pleased at the caution displayed.

"I would have to think over a thing like this. There's a lot of responsibility in it."

"You have been carrying responsibility right along," came the retort. "This is almost identically the same work as you have been doing to the satisfaction of every one. I am not making you an offer, but only sounding you. If you are ready to talk business I'll get matters in shape."

Bobby was fully awake to his opportunity now.

"You and Mr. Hartwell think that I can do it, and I believe myself that I can. If there is a chance here, I want it."

"Hartwell said that you had 'proved up' when you refused to remove the Jones fellow from Thorndike restaurant," Mr. Henderson divulged. "That was a feather in your cap. Hartwell said that you knew what you wanted to work with as well as how to work with what you had."

"I'll talk this hotel business over with my father," Bobby said. He was pretty serious, as such an offer would likely make any one in his position, but he was practically decided already to accept the promotion.

"Of course, if you do not want the hotels I want you to keep right on as you are. So your future is settled—but even the four thousand which we will pay is a large increase over what you receive now, and if you should pull the hotels on to a good paying basis, your prospects are brilliant enough to satisfy a man twice your age. I think you can win out."

That night the plan was unfolded at the Hawley farm. Mrs. Hawley listened in excited impatience, saying quickly when all was told:

"You said you would, Bobby, didn't you?"

"I said that I would think it over," was Bobby's reply, and Mr. Hawley observing the disappointment on his wife's face, suggested:

"I think that was the thing to say. It's a tremendous responsibility. If he were ten years older—"

"But suppose they give some one else the chance," Mrs. Hawley was almost sobbing over the thought.

"I do not believe they will," Mr. Hawley smiled as he said it and his wife was partially reassured. "Corporations do not jump at any untried man. Bobby's experience is worth enough to bring him the offer."

The father's summing up of the case was most accurate. In two days Mr. Henderson was up to talk the matter over further.

"I'm going to take the hotels if I can get them," Bobby informed him.

"I expected that you would decide to do it," was the reply. "I should have been disappointed in you if you had let the opportunity slide by you. If the restaurants can't be handled right we'll sell them. There are plenty who will buy at their present stage of fine profit."

"I would not want to see them change hands," Bobby declared. "I have such a well-trained lot of help that I could run them to-day, from my home, by telephone."

Mr. Henderson showed his satisfaction.

"If you could make the hotels pay and keep the restaurants along at the same time, you could have about anything you might want from the road. You've demonstrated your fitness

for this kind of business, otherwise the road would not consider this project. There has been a wrangle over the 'Hartwell Hotels' as they are called, for ten years—a faction saying that the road had no business to enter into the catering business—but Hartwell was set about it, and kept the places going. There's nothing better for you in a business way in this country, than to put the hotels on a paying basis. Now you're going to marry. Of course you will occupy a suite, and a good one, in either hotel you decide on. You cannot live with your father and mother, but they will be satisfied if you are near them."

"I have thought that I would get Dick Bradbury to stop the first season with me. He is going to make alterations in his house on the hill, and I think I can get him to do it during my first season as manager."

Mr. Henderson brought his hand down on the younger man's shoulder in an enthusiasm he was unable to control.

"If you should get Senator Bradbury and his wife to stop at the Thorwald during your first season, you're made," he exclaimed. "The Senator swings an immense influence in poli-

tics as well as business. You would get a big business from Washington if it was known that he would spend the summer with you. As for that beautiful wife of his—you think you can get them? You're pretty sure of it?"

"If Mrs. Bradbury and the Senator do not come to my wedding, I'll be a mighty disappointed man," was the answer.

"This is the kind of news that will please Hartwell," the superintendent said, much interested. "He will blame me for keeping you in the background, while he has been advocating bringing you forward, but the time has not been ripe for the deal until now. It's just ripe now."

CHAPTER XXXV

A Wedding.

Of course the manager of the restaurants told Miss Chadwick all the day's events, that evening, and of course the girl was delighted.

"I am pleased that you will have the hotels, but then you are provided for without them," she said. "I never thought that I should have the honor of having Mrs. Senator Bradbury as a wedding guest," blushing at the display of vanity. "There was a long article about her in the magazines, within a month. It told of her elegant gowns, of her devotion to her husband, and of her pretty domestic traits which had not been interfered with in her mingling with the highest society."

"She cannot play the violin," her future husband stipulated. "Domestic traits and gowns can be acquired—and as for beauty, she only has a portion of it and there is some outside of the Bradbury family. I'm sure that if you and Joe's mother were together, and you

wore that pretty white dress and played the violin, and Joe's mother should have on the most gorgeous costume she possesses, you would get the most of the attention. I think that is my family's opinion, too."

The girl laughed, as she retorted:

"It's nice to have you think so; but I shall be delighted to have her come. The article said that she spends much of her time inquiring into the needs of the poor. She always drives her husband to and from the Senate chamber. It also said that her home was a favorite resort of the families of the foreign diplomats. It quite frightens me when I think that she might come to my wedding, but when you say she is so gentle and kind, I feel so proud that I forget to be frightened."

"Joe will be my 'best man' of course. When I think that Joe is a director of a big railroad, of a bank, a street-car line, and a half a dozen other enterprises, and he not quite twenty-five years old—and then I think of how he and I were selling pond-lilies not so very long ago—I sometimes find myself a little skeptical about its being either of us, after all."

"Perhaps other people will think you have

done something, when you are manager of three hotels,'' was her quiet retort.

''If everybody knew all about it, it would be said that a part of my good fortune came from having an expert accountant close at hand,'' he said, and she interrupted with:

''As you have shown such good judgment as to arrange for the accountant's being always near, we'll work awfully hard to make a success, wherever we are.''

In a month every detail was perfected in the absorption of the Thorwald House, and the business of the three places was turned over to the new manager. Extensive improvements were being planned. In two months a wedding took place at the Hawley farm.

The pretty bride's happiness was complete when Mrs. Senator Bradbury, with her husband at one side and Joe at the other, approached her.

''I hope that I may become as good as you are,'' she said, when they had conversed some time.

Joe's mother turned her wonderful, deep beautiful eyes on her husband, enquiringly.

"Perhaps she means as good to look at," was the financier-senator's explanation.

"No," the bride corrected, "I have read so much about you—about how happy you are in your work—"

"I'll give you my recipe," said the older woman, her laugh covering the flush of pleasure. "Try to be a real helpmate, and give your first and best thoughts to your home."

Senator Bradbury tucked his wife's hand under his arm and laughed contentedly. The Hartwells came up and joined in the conversation. Later when Henry Bradbury and wife with Mr. and Mrs. Marsh, the Dick Bradburys and the Hawleys, father and son, with their wives were congregated in the sitting room, the senior partner of the old-time firm of "Bobby and Joe's" asked:

"About when shall I plan to come out west to act as your best man, Joe?" The newly-made bride looked out from behind her husband's arm to catch the slow answer:

"I live in such an ideal atmosphere that I'm inclined to think that I shall never have the courage to try a change."

"If you know of any nice girl for Joe,

Bobby," broke in Senator Bradbury, "we'll be glad to welcome her into our peculiar atmosphere. There's a lot of girls out our way who sigh as he passes by, but there seems to be no particular one. I think that if there ever is one, it will have to be through a second person's finding, and I'm too busy to work up a campaign for him. He seems wholly unable to help himself in the matter."

Joe did not even blush, though the laugh at his expense was hearty.

"I think I know some one who might assist," Mr. Hawley interposed with feigned seriousness.

"Now, John Hawley, you keep quiet," remonstrated Mrs. Hawley, and emphasized any objection she might have to a continuance of the conversation in its present direction, by taking her husband out of the room.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Conclusion.

With such a business training as the young man had, and with such sterling principles to found his training on, it is not to be wondered at that Robert Hawley became a successful hotel manager. He had good friends, but not one of them came to him by accident. Every one had seen that in his make-up which had more real value than money—honest accomplishment—and they were glad of an opportunity to put their money against the other species of capital which he had to give. The three hotels became famous, and a new departure was the keeping open of the Thorwald through the winter. Thousands of people throughout the land look back on those winter sports at the big hotel as the most pleasant experiences of their lives.

Mr. Henderson became General Manager of the C. & A. He often said that his good luck lay in the fact that he had "found Bobby Hawley." At all events, the two have remained

great friends. Old Mr. Bradbury is to-day remembered as a quiet, unassuming pilgrim of life who went his way without harm to any man, but with blessings from many.

The Hawleys, father and son, and their wives, and all their friends go on their ways, enjoying the good opinion of their fellow men, and secure against reverses as far as careful planning by clean consciences can make any one secure.

Thorndike is the same old-fashioned town to-day, as when the Hawley raft was first put on the lake. Many a traveler remembers the first glimpse of the little New England village he got—with its snowy-white streets bathed in the morning sunlight; of the simple healthfulness of it all, and of the almost quaintly designed restaurant which was known so long as "Bobby and Joe's."

THE END

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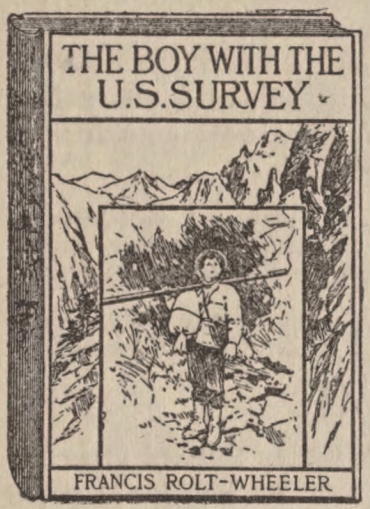

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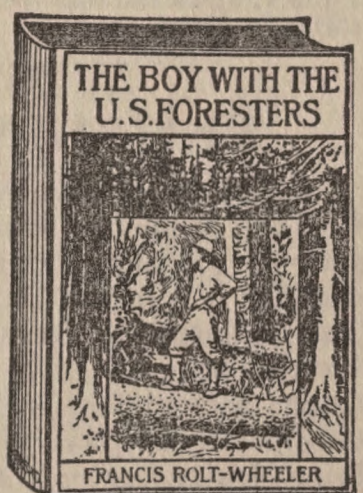

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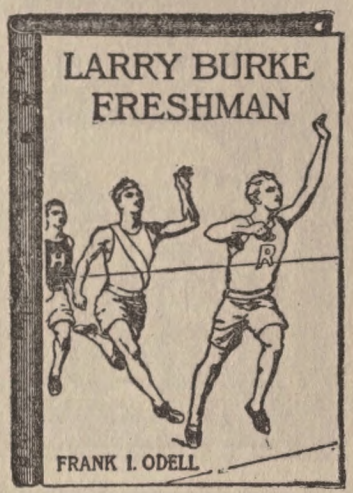

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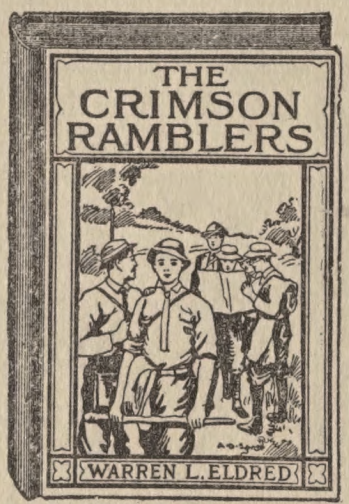

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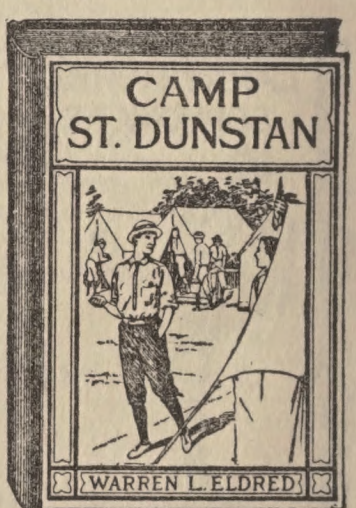

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